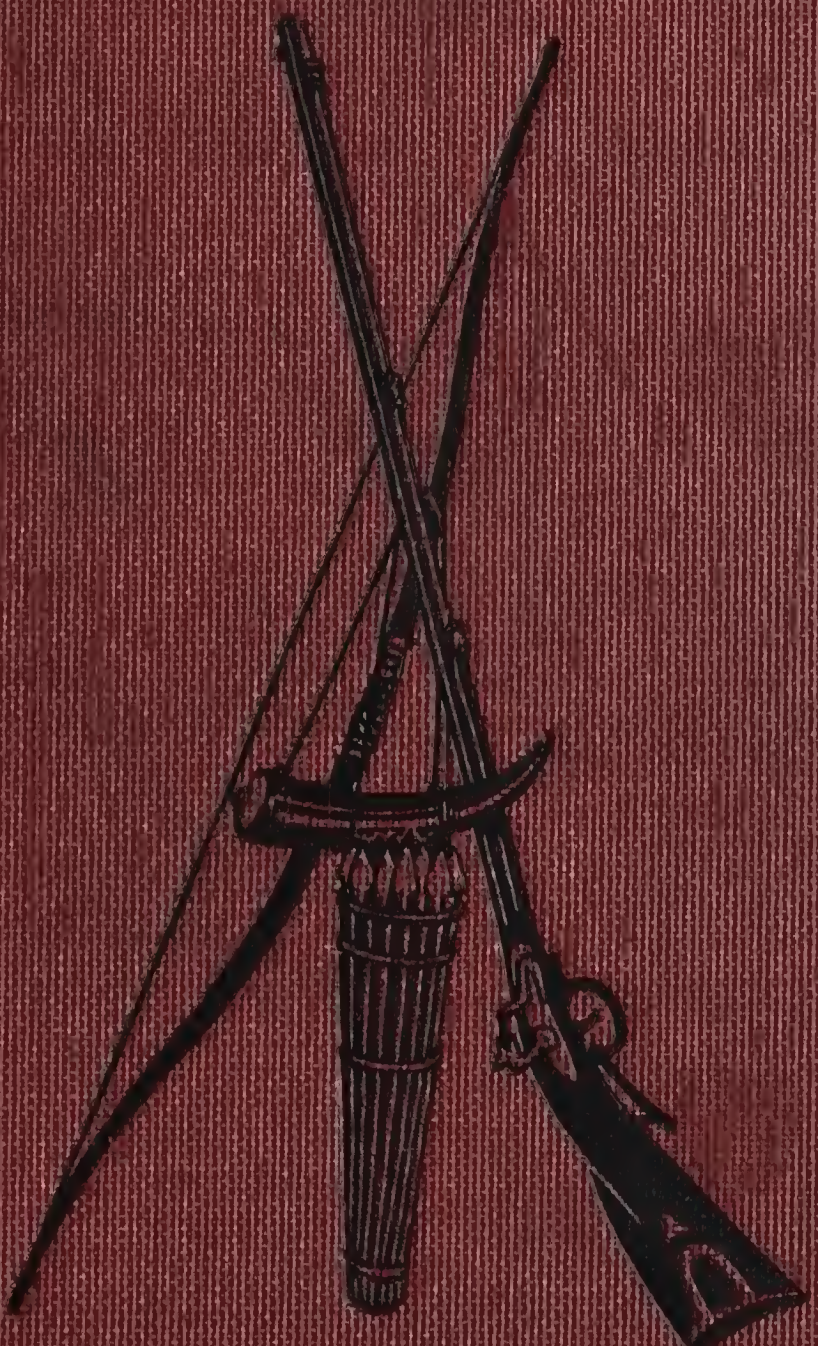
CAPTAIN JIM MASON



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CAPTAIN JIM MASON

ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR

By ELMER R. GREGOR

JIM MASON, BACKWOODSMAN
JIM MASON, SCOUT
CAPTAIN JIM MASON

Western Indian Series..

WHITE OTTER
THE WAR TRAIL
THREE SIOUX SCOUTS

Eastern Indian Series

SPOTTED DEER
RUNNING FOX
THE WHITE WOLF

THEY STOPPED TO ENJOY THE GLORIOUS PANORAMA OF WOODS AND WATER THAT LAY BEFORE THEM

CAPTAIN JIM MASON

BY

ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR

AUTHOR OF "JIM MASON, SCOUT"; "JIM MASON, BACKWOODSMAN"; "SPOTTED DEER," "THREE SIOUX SCOUTS," ETC.

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CAPTAIN JIM MASON

CHAPTER I

KICHKINET BRINGS A CLUE

AFTER his successful battle with the French and their Indians at Lake George, early in September, 1755, Colonel William Johnson set his troops at work building a strong fort at the southeastern end of the lake. It was completed early in the autumn, and called Fort William Henry in honor of the sons of King George. A garrison of colonial militiamen and a company of rangers were stationed at the fort to watch French activities at Ticonderoga, the French stronghold, thirty miles away, at the northern end of the lake.

The rangers were experienced backwoodsmen and scouts who had been recruited from the frontier settlements. They were rugged, fearless men accustomed to the hardships and perils of the wilderness, and well qualified to cope with the crafty Canadian voyagers and their savage Indian allies whom the French sent forth to raid the colonial frontiers.

The rangers were commanded by Captain Jim Mason, a young frontiersman and scout, who was held in high esteem by Colonel Johnson and his officers. Jim Mason had passed much time among the Mohawks, who knew him as Achawi, He-Who-Settles-Disputes. Two years previous, after the death of his father, he had made his way to the Mohawk village to begin his career as a trader. His courage and honesty won the respect and confidence of the Mohawks, and he was able to exert a strong influence toward gaining their allegiance for the English colonists.

The following year, with the beginning of war between the French and the English, Jim Mason was made a lieutenant in the colonial militia and appointed chief of scouts. He accompanied Colonel Johnson on an eventful journey to Virginia, and enlisted as a scout with General Braddock. After the disastrous expedition against Fort Duquesne, Jim returned to Fort Johnson and was commissioned to lead a company of Mohawks to join Colonel Johnson and his troops in the expedition against the French at Crown Point. Jim and his Mohawk scouts played a conspicuous part in the battle with the French at Lake George, and when Colonel Johnson withdrew his forces from the

field at the approach of cold weather, Jim was promoted to a captaincy in recognition of his services, and detailed at Fort William Henry in command of the rangers.

Jim Mason and his rangers found much to do, as the French kept marauding companies of Canadians and Indians constantly about the borders of the English settlements. They made their devastating raids, and disappeared into the wilderness with amazing suddenness, and the border settlements were in a state of panic. Alert to the peril, Colonel Johnson realized that unless those outlaws were trailed to their rendezvous and overcome, there would be little peace for the people of the colonies. He determined to employ Mason and his rangers to disperse the troublesome foes who had their secret rendezvous in the wilderness beyond the English frontiers.

Early in October Jim Mason received orders to devote himself to running down the outlaws. It was a difficult and perilous task, and Jim realized the great responsibility that had been placed upon him. However, he was entirely familiar with the type of crafty foe with whom he had to deal, and he believed that with fair luck he might eventually accomplish his task.

"Well, Dan, we have a real job on our hands

again,'' he told old Dan Holcombe, a veteran scout who had accompanied Jim in many of his adventures.

''Right sartin, son,'' declared Holcombe. ''An' do you know, Jim, I've an idee that I know who's at the bottom of this business.''

''Whom do you suspect?'' Jim asked, quickly.

''Wall, I'm not ready to give proof, but I figure that Jacques Trouville an' that rogue Stockley have a hand in it.''

Jim nodded thoughtfully.

''Dan, I have been thinking of that possibility,'' he said.

Holcombe winked.

At that moment a young fellow in buckskins approached and stood at salute.

''Well, Williams?'' Jim inquired.

''Captain Mason, your friend the Mohawk has returned,'' said the ranger.

''Send him here,'' Jim told him.

''Very good, sir.''

In a few moments Jim and Holcombe were joined by a tall, sinewy, young Mohawk warrior.

''Kichkinet, I am glad to see you,'' Jim said, cordially.

''Achawi, I have brought words from my people,'' Kichkinet told him.

He nodded toward Holcombe who returned the silent salutation.

"Come to my quarters," said Jim. "Holcombe, I wish you to hear what Kichkinet has to tell me."

They went to the officers' barracks, and entered a small room at one end of the long log building.

"Now, Mohawk, tell us what you have to say," said Jim, as they seated themselves.

"It is bad," declared Kichkinet. "Achawi, I believe that our enemy Ho-sa-ha-ho and that white man are making this trouble for your people."

Jim and Holcombe exchanged glances.

"Do you mean Jacques Trouville and his friend Stockley?" Jim asked, sharply.

Kichkinet nodded.

"Are you sure of it?" inquired Jim.

"No," replied Kichkinet. "My father told me about it. I will tell you about it. My people are getting ready for the big hunt. Our hunters are in the woods looking for game. You know my brother Black Cloud and my brother Stands Alone."

"Yes."

"Black Cloud and Stands Alone were far away toward the-place-where-the-sun-goes-

down. They were looking for game. Pretty soon they saw some fresh tracks. They were the tracks of Indians. Stands Alone looked close. Pretty soon he saw something. He called Black Cloud. They found the tracks of white men. Two white men were traveling with those Indians. They were going toward the village of our enemies, the Shawnees.''

Kichkinet paused and looked at his companions. For some moments they continued silent. At last Dan Holcombe spoke.

''Mebbe it was a war party of Shawnees with white prisoners,'' he said.

''No,'' Kichkinet declared, emphatically. ''Stands Alone says those white men were not prisoners. He says he followed their tracks a long ways. He says the white men moved away from the Indians many times. Then they came back. Prisoners would not do that.''

''That's proper figurin','' agreed Holcombe.

''Stands Alone says he believes those Indians were Hurons,'' continued Kichkinet. ''He says he believes Ho-sa-ha-ho and that other white man are with them. He says he believes they were going to the village of the Shawnees. He says he believes much harm will come of it. My father feels bad about it. He sent me here to give you the words of Stands Alone. My father

told me to bring you to his lodge. He wishes to talk about this thing. Achawi, will you go to my father?''

Jim glanced soberly at Holcombe. The latter smiled.

''Jim, it 'pears like my guess warn't so far off after all,'' he laughed.

Jim nodded. Then he turned to Kichkinet.

''Mohawk, the French have sent both Indians and white men into the woods,'' he said. ''They often travel together. How does Stands Alone know that those white men were Ho-sa-ha-ho and his friend Stockley?''

''Stands Alone has sharp eyes,'' declared Kichkinet. ''He looks close. Ho-sa-ha-ho has been to our village many times. Stands Alone has seen his tracks. Ho-sa-ha-ho turns one foot away from the trail. Stands Alone knows that track.''

''Dan, it is true,'' Jim told Holcombe. ''I saw that track. I noticed it when Kichkinet and I were trailing Trouville and his friends from the Mohawk camp to the river at the time they stole my furs. Ha-yo-went-ha showed it to me, but I had forgotten it.''

''That looks convincin' agin' Trouville, but what's the proof agin' Stockley?'' inquired Holcombe.

"Yes, Kichkinet, tell us how Stands Alone knows that the other white man was Stockley," said Jim.

"My father did not tell me that," replied Kichkinet. "Perhaps Stands Alone will tell you about it."

"Kichkinet, I will go to talk with your father," agreed Jim. "When the next sun appears, we will set out for your village."

"It is good," said Kichkinet.

"Dan, I wish you to go with me," Jim told Holcombe. "Perhaps we shall pick up a clew that will place us on the trail of the men who have committed these outrages along our borders. If Trouville and Stockley are the leaders of those outlaws, we must run them down. If we succeed, I believe our troubles will come to an end."

"Very likely," agreed Holcombe. "However, Trouville an' his friends are sly wolves, an' our trail is likely to be long an' rough before we finally hole them up in their den. Anyway, Jim, it 'pears to me like we've struck a warm scent, an' we'd best follow it."

Jim left his companions and went to report to Colonel Bagley, the commanding officer at the fort. The officer listened attentively and

heartily approved Jim's proposed visit to the Mohawk camp.

"Mason, it looks like a clue, and I know you are wise enough to make the most of it. If you can run down the cowardly outlaws who are causing so much trouble along our frontiers you will render a great service to our people. I wish you the best of luck. If you require aid, send a courier, and I will send a strong force to your assistance."

"Thank you, Colonel Bagley," said Jim.

Jim returned to his quarters, and spent a large part of the night thinking upon the task which confronted him. He knew that if Jacques Trouville and his friends were the instigators of the savage attacks upon the settlements, he would find himself opposed by treacherous and determined foes whom it would be difficult to overcome.

Jacques Trouville, known among the Mohawks as Ho-sa-ha-ho, or Big Mouth, was a typical representative of the French-Canadian Coureurs de Bois, a set of wild, lawless adventurers who were as wily, savage, and treacherous as the warlike Hurons among whom they passed their time. Casting off the restraints of civilization, they adopted the life and customs of their Indian companions; adorning their

long black hair with eagle plumes, smearing their swarthy faces with bright colored pigments and decorating their buckskin shirts with the scalp locks of their foes. Untiring and fearless, they penetrated far into the unexplored solitudes of the vast northern wilderness; guiding their frail canoes through the treacherous rapids of unknown rivers, and following cautiously along the shadowy forest trails that led to isolated Indian camps. No hardship was too severe, no peril too great for those dauntless freebooters of the wilderness. Seated beside their solitary camp fires, or accepting the hospitality of their Indian allies, they roared their rollicking woodland songs and dispelled the gloom of the night with their light-hearted laughter. Gay, impulsive, and improvident, they were true knights of adventure for whom the sacredness of home ties had no enticements. Loyal and generous to their friends, they were vengeful and merciless to their foes; and once their hatred was aroused, they were as perilous and bloodthirsty as wolves.

These were the men whom the French fur traders had employed to guard the precious cargoes of pelts on the long perilous voyages along the lakes and rivers of the northland. These were the men upon whom the French

commanders depended to lead their war parties of Pottawattomies, Ojibwas, and Hurons against the English frontiers. These were the men with whom Jim Mason and his rangers were about to clash.

Jim had encountered Jacques Trouville and his friends in the Mohawk village two years before. In league with one, Pierre La Valle, known in the Indian camps as Tor-yoh-ne, The Wolf, they were making crafty efforts to turn the Mohawks against the English and win them to an alliance with the French. Aware of their plans, Jim had set to work to expose their treachery, and after a number of perilous adventures finally convinced the Mohawks that Tor-yoh-ne was a deceitful Huron spy.

The following year Jim, in company with Holcombe and Kichkinet, again encountered Tor-yoh-ne at Ticonderoga, but this time the treacherous half-breed was a bit too confident, and while attempting to capture them he met his death at the hands of Dan Holcombe.

Both Jacques Trouville and Stockley had been loyal friends of the rascally half-breed, and Jim felt certain that they would attempt to avenge his death. He believed that their bold and vicious raids along the English frontiers were made more to satisfy their savage desire

for vengeance than to aid the French in their efforts to demoralize and intimidate the courageous pioneers at the edge of the wilderness.

The thought roused him. He had witnessed the results of those treacherous attacks upon the frontiers; the smoking ruins of burning cabins; brave men lying dead in the clearings, where they had been shot down from ambush; the mangled forms of helpless women and children who had fallen victims to the murderous tomahawks of the maddened Hurons. The memories made his blood turn hot with anger. He believed that a great opportunity for service had presented itself, and he pledged himself to complete the difficult task to which Colonel Johnson had assigned him.

"If Trouville and Stockley are responsible for these atrocities, I shall search until I find their trail, and follow it until I run them to earth," Jim declared, grimly.

CHAPTER II

CAUSE FOR ANXIETY

AT daylight Jim and his companions set out upon their four days' journey to the Mohawk camp. Jim stopped for a moment at the gate of the fort to give final instructions to his lieutenant, Bert Jackson, a stalwart young woodsman from Fort Johnson.

"Keep our men in the woods, and watch for war parties from Ticonderoga," Jim told him.

"We'll keep our eyes open," said Jackson. "In the meantime, Captain, watch out for yourself. Like as not you'll meet up with some o' those rascals who are raidin' the western settlements."

"Nothin' would suit us better," Holcombe replied, savagely.

Jim nodded silent assent.

A moment afterward the three scouts turned away. They presented an interesting contrast as they moved rapidly along the trail.

Jim Mason was a tall, athletic young frontiersman of nineteen years, with bold brown eyes, long black hair and a dark complexion

that gave him somewhat the appearance of an Indian. He wore the familiar frontier costume of fringed buckskin hunting shirt and breeches, Indian moccasins, and a coonskin cap. His weapons were a long-barreled flint-lock rifle, a tomahawk, and a hunting knife. Powder horn and bullet pouch hung at his right side, and from his left shoulder was slung a fringed buckskin bag containing flint and steel, and various necessities for life in the wilderness. His blanket was rolled and carried on his back.

Dan Holcombe was a rawboned, broad-shouldered man well advanced in years, but with every evidence of strength, agility, and endurance. His face was tanned and seamed from long exposure to sun and wind, and his long hair was plentifully streaked with gray, but the calm gray eyes beneath his shaggy brows still retained their youthful luster. Holcombe, too, wore buckskins and a coonskin cap. He was armed with his beloved flint-lock rifle, an Indian tomahawk, and a skinning knife. He carried his blanket upon his back, and his powder horn and bullet pouch hung at his side.

Kichkinet, who was about the age of Jim, was a typical Mohawk warrior with the dignity and boldness of his race. His head was closely cropped, except for an erect, narrow crest of

hair which extended back from the center of his forehead and terminated in an ornamented scalp lock on his crown. His flashing black eyes gave character and animation to his stern, impassive face. He wore moccasins and buckskin breeches, but was bare above the waist. A gaudy trade blanket was rolled into a pack between his shoulders, and below it hung a wolfskin case which held his bow and arrows. Tomahawk and skinning knife were secured beneath his rawhide belt, and a small buckskin bag containing his fire sticks hung at his side.

Jim had met Kichkinet at Fort Johnson two years before, and from that day a strong and loyal friendship existed between them. Kichkinet was the son of Ha-yo-went-ha, a famous Mohawk chief, and he had rendered valuable assistance while Jim was attempting to win the Mohawks for the English. The young frontiersman, and the Mohawk had shared many perilous adventures, and each had learned to admire the courage and ability of the other.

The scouts passed around the southern end of the lake, and soon came upon the familiar trail that led westward toward the village of the Mohawks. They followed the trail to the top of the first high hill, and then they stopped to enjoy the glorious panorama of woods and

waters that lay before them. It was a bright balmy day in mid-October, and the wilderness was resplendent with its gay antumnal tints. The sky was blue and cloudless, and a misty purple haze hovered above the hills. Below them was the great lake, calm and brooding, like some rare gem of the wilderness, its placid depths reflecting the brilliant colors of the forest that rimmed its shores. It extended far away into the north where it contracted to a narrow twisting stream that led still farther northward into the stronghold of the French. All about it was the vast primeval wilderness, glorious with the vivid coloring of the hardwoods and the dark, somber beauty of the evergreens. The sober brown tones of oaks showed forth in striking contrast with the golden leaves of aspens and birches and the flaming foliage of maples and sumacs. All blended their tints in a pleasing harmony of color which transformed the landscape into a fairyland. The scouts studied it in silent appreciation. It was some time before they spoke.

"This is a glorious time of the year," said Jim.

"It shore is purty," agreed Holcombe.

"It is the time when Ha-wen-ne-yu smokes the great Peace Pipe," Kichkinet told them.

"See, he is puffing the smoke over the hills and into the valleys to drive away the Evil Ones, and make the world good for his children."

Jim nodded. He recalled the Indian legend which related how Ha-wen-ne-yu, the Good Spirit of the Mohawks, each autumn lighted his great Peace Pipe and puffed smoke over the earth to drive away fogs and pestilence, and bring health and happiness for his children—the Mohawks. As Jim studied the smoky haze above the hill tops he suddenly perceived the significance of the simple faith which was expressed in the Indian legend.

"Dan, our friends the Mohawks, have many beautiful thoughts," he told Holcombe.

"They're powerful superstitions," replied Holcombe.

"What I have told you is true," Kichkinet said, quickly.

"Come, we must move on," Jim told them.

The trail turned down the westerly slope of the hill, and followed the edge of a large swamp. Then it led away into the silent, dark solitudes of the wilderness. It was the highway over which the Mohawks had passed for many years on their visits to the great woodland lake upon which the English had established their fort.

The Mohawk village was four days' journey to the westward, and the scouts realized that until they reached it they would be in constant peril of an encounter with their foes. Besides the Hurons, the Ojibwas, and the Pottawattomies from the northern wilderness, there were roving war parties of Shawnees and Delawares who had been enticed to take the war trail in behalf of the French. The powerful Iroquois, however, remained faithful in their alliance with the English colonists. The tribes of the great Indian League were a formidable barrier in the way of the French, who were making desperate efforts to sweep it from their path.

The strongly fortified villages of the Iroquois, which were scattered through the wilderness for many leagues to the westward, offered effective and invaluable protection to the colonial frontiers. If the Iroquois were overcome, the French would find an easy and unobstructed way to the English settlements. Jim was fully alert to the peril. He was eager, therefore, to reach the Mohawk camp at the earliest possible moment, for he felt quite certain that if Jacques Trouville and his companions had gone to the Shawnees, as the Mohawks suspected, a perilous plot of some sort was in the making.

"Yes, Jim, if what the Mohawks say is true, it looks like Trouville an' his gang are out for mischief," Dan Holcombe said, soberly. "It's more than friendship that leads 'em to the Shawnee camp."

"It is bad," declared Kichkinet.

At midday they stopped to drink at a little mountain stream, and eat a small ration of jerked venison which they had brought from the fort. Then they continued toward the west. Game was abundant, but Jim and Holcombe feared to shoot lest the report of a rifle might betray them to their foes. Kichkinet, however, killed several grouse with his arrows.

"A quiet trail leads to long life an' happiness," laughed Holcombe.

"All appears calm and peaceful," replied Jim.

"We've scarce gone far enough to bump into trouble," Holcombe reminded him.

At sunset they arrived at a familiar camp site, where Jim and his Mohawk scouts had camped on their way to Lake George several months before. A small spring bubbled up at the base of a mossy ledge, and as the spot was secluded in a dense stand of timber, they determined to remain there for the night. After

a careful reconnaissance to make sure that the locality was free of foes, they made a little fire of dried sticks and broiled the grouse.

"We'd best get through with the fire before dark," cautioned Holcombe. "A little flame shows up considerable at night."

Kichkinet nodded.

A few moments afterward he left them and disappeared into the woods. He moved cautiously along the trail over which they had come, to learn if they had been followed. It was the usual precaution when the Mohawks found themselves in close proximity to their foes. Darkness had already fallen when Jim and Holcombe heard the soft, querulous call of the little red owl. They recognized it as a signal from Kichkinet. A moment later the Mohawk rejoined them.

"My brothers, everything is good," he said.

"Mebbe so, but we'll take no chances," said Holcombe.

"Correct," agreed Jim. "Kichkinet and I will watch."

"I'll take my turn," Holcombe told him.

"No, Dan; Kichkinet and I will keep the night watches, until we reach the Mohawks."

"Lad, you make me feel old," Holcombe laughed, uneasily. "However, I'll wager I can

do with less sleep than either of you young roosters.''

''I have little doubt of that,'' Jim assured him. ''In an emergency I shall not hesitate to call upon you.''

''All right—Captain,'' Holcombe said, mischievously.

''Yes, Mr. Holcombe,'' replied Jim.

''Hi, that's a quick comeback,'' chuckled Dan. ''Well, good night, Jim.''

''Good night, Dan,'' Jim said, cordially. ''Now, Mohawk, I will watch; sleep until I call you.''

''Good,'' agreed Kichkinet.

Holcombe and Kichkinet drew their blankets about them and lay down to sleep. Jim seated himself against a massive pine and began his lonely vigil. The heavy stand of towering evergreens shut out the light from the stars, and the forest was black and still. Jim was barely able to distinguish the forms of his friends, who were lying within bow length of him. It was not long, however, before the heavy breathing of Holcombe gave evidence that the veteran scout was sleeping soundly. The Mohawk was silent.

As the night wore on, and he heard nothing to arouse his suspicions, Jim gradually relaxed

his vigilance. He listened sleepily to the soft soughing of the wind in the pine tops, and his eyes grew heavy. Several times he found himself nodding drowsily. He rose to his feet and spread his arms to rouse himself. At that moment he caught the sound of a stealthy footfall. It was close at hand. Instantly alert, Jim seized his rifle and peered anxiously into the night. For some moments all was still. Then, as he again heard the sound, he moved cautiously toward Holcombe and Kichkinet. Both were in their places. Jim touched the Mohawk. Kichkinet immediately sat up. A moment afterwards Holcombe raised himself. Both kept silent, fearing to speak until they learned the danger which threatened them. Jim stooped, and whispered his warning.

"Something is moving—listen," he cautioned.

Kichkinet and Holcombe slipped from their blankets and rose to join him. Then for many moments the three scouts stood close together, watching and listening for further evidence of the mysterious prowler. The sounds had ceased. They heard nothing but the soft rustling of the wind in the pines. Still they continued to listen. It was a long time before they ventured to speak.

"What was it?" Holcombe asked, softly.

"It sounded like some one moving around us," Jim told him.

He had barely finished speaking when they heard a shrill, piercing scream a short distance to the northward. They recognized it as the hunting cry of the lynx, but there was something about it that aroused their suspicions.

"Somethin' wrong thar, sure," declared Holcombe.

"Yes, Dan, I believe it was counterfeit," agreed Jim. "Mohawk, how do you feel about it?"

"Bad," said Kichkinet.

They had little doubt that the cry had been a signal. The thought disturbed them. The sounds which Jim had heard suddenly assumed greater significance. Had some wily scout found their camp? The question suggested itself to each of them. Holcombe was first to speak.

"Jim, it looks like some one has found us," he said.

"Listen," cautioned Jim.

The lynx cry again echoed through the night. This time they felt certain that it was counterfeit. In a few moments it was repeated. Then all was still. Convinced that the call had been

a signal, the scouts listened anxiously for a reply. Many moments passed. There was no response.

"Dan, what do you make of it?" inquired Jim.

"I don't like it," declared Holcombe. "That lynx cry warn't genooine, I'm plumb sartin of *that.*"

"So am I," said Jim.

"Then it must have been a signal," Holcombe told him. "You heard some one snoopin' around us. Your ears are sharp, an' you know human footsteps when you hear 'em. I'm takin' your judgment on that, Jim."

"It was not an animal," Jim assured him.

"It's quite likely that some French scout was pokin' around these parts an' saw or smelled our fire," said Holcombe. "After dark he prowled over here to find out about it. What he saw, we can't tell. However, I believe it was him that made the signal. Thar's three of us, an' he yelped three times. Sort of looks suspicious like, don't it Jim? Anyway, I believe we'd best mosey away from here."

"Dan, I believe you are right," Jim told him. "If we have been discovered, it would be folly to remain. Mohawk, do you agree?"

"Achawi, we must go," replied Kichkinet.

"Pretty soon our enemies will come here to find us."

They rolled their blankets and moved silently away through the night. Kichkinet led, and Jim and Holcombe followed close behind him. They had gone barely a bowshot when Kichkinet turned from the narrow trail and began a detour through the woods.

"The Mohawk has the right idee," chuckled Holcombe. "If our enemies find that we've slipped away from 'em they'll try to come up with us somewhar' along the trail. Our job is to keep far enough from it to fool 'em."

"Exactly," agreed Jim.

They went a considerable distance toward the south before they turned and resumed their journey into the west. Then, when the night was three fourths gone, they turned back toward the trail. It led through a wide, open valley with which they were familiar, and at daylight they stopped on a low wooded ridge. They believed that if foes had attempted to overtake them along the trail, they might return over the same route when their search proved futile.

"In that case we shall have a look at them," said Jim.

"You'd best get a few winks of sleep," Hol-

combe told him. "The Mohawk an' I will do the lookin'."

"All right Dan," laughed Jim. "Call me if you see anything interesting."

"For sartin," replied Dan.

It was only a few moments until Jim was sleeping soundly. Holcombe and Kichkinet seated themselves to watch the trail. Shortly after sunrise they discovered a company of men coming from the west. Kichkinet awakened Jim.

"Achawi, some one is coming," he said.

They joined Holcombe who was intently watching the strangers. There were six in the company, and they were Indians. As they advanced rapidly along the trail in single file, Kichkinet attempted to identify them.

"They are not my people," he said.

"Then they are enemies," declared Jim.

"Mohawk, who are they?" Holcombe inquired, impatiently.

At that moment Kichkinet looked anxiously toward the top of the ridge. He placed his finger across his lips to caution his companions to silence. They heard voices. Some one appeared to be approaching along the ridge. The scouts sank to the ground and watched a small opening in the timber directly above them.

Holcombe cocked his rifle. Jim shook his head and pointed toward the Indians in the valley.

"I'll not shoot unless I have to," Holcombe whispered.

A moment afterward two warriors passed swiftly across the little clearing and vanished into the timber. Neither Jim nor Holcombe had been able to identify them. They looked inquiringly at Kichkinet. He nodded, but kept silent. When he felt certain that the warriors had gone beyond hearing, he spoke to his alert companions.

"Ojibwas," he said.

"So those are the bucks who tried for our scalps," Holcombe said, savagely. "Well, I guess we've slipped by 'em, but I'm wonderin' what they're doin' along this trail. "Pears like they're a scoutin' party sent here to keep watch on things."

Jim became thoughtful. Having learned the identity of his foes, he was attempting to guess the reason for their appearance along the trail to the Mohawk camp. It was evident that they were scouts, and Jim believed they were watching to intercept couriers who might leave the English fort to communicate with the Mohawks. That possibility caused him little anxiety, for he knew that neither couriers nor troops would

set out for the Mohawk camp unless he gave the order. However, the presence of the Ojibwas along the Mohawk trail made him suspicious.

"Dan, this thing troubles me," he told Holcombe.

"How so, Jim?" Holcombe asked, quickly.

"I believe these Ojibwas are members of a war party that has accompanied Trouville to the Shawnee camp," said Jim. "In that event I also believe that Trouville has left these scouts along the trail to warn him if troops or couriers leave the fort. Dan, if he has done that, we may be sure that he is planning further mischief, and is eager to make his attack before our people learn his intentions. Perhaps he is organizing a war party for another raid along our western frontiers; perhaps he is planning to attack the Mohawks before we can send troops to assist them."

"I'm a bit uneasy, myself," replied Holcombe.

"Dan, we must reach the Mohawks without further delay," Jim declared, anxiously.

"Achawi, your words are good," said Kichkinet. "I believe my people will tell us what we wish to know."

A few moments later they hurried away

toward the west. Suspicious of Trouville and his treacherous confederates, they were eager to reach the Mohawk camp where they hoped to obtain a clue to the whereabouts and intentions of their troublesome foe.

CHAPTER III

THE MOHAWK CAMP

ON the third day, at the end of another cautious detour, Jim and his companions came in sight of the river which passed the Mohawk camp. The next day they came upon a trail which led directly to their destination. Shortly before sunset they discovered smoke from the Mohawk fires. The long perilous journey was almost at an end.

"My brothers, there is the smoke from our village," Kichkinet cried, gayly. "Pretty soon we will be with my people."

"I shall be glad to see them," said Jim.

"An' they'll be powerful glad to see you, lad," Holcombe told him. "Unless I'm way off on Injun ways, there'll be some big doin's in your honor."

Kichkinet's eyes twinkled merrily.

Darkness had already fallen when they finally approached the Mohawk camp. Fearful of being mistaken for foes, Kichkinet led the way toward the high log stockade which surrounded

the village. As he drew near he called out in the Mohawk tongue.

"Hi, hi, my friends, here is Kichkinet," he called. "I am bringing our brothers Achawi and To-nes-sa-ah."

The latter name, meaning On-the-watch, was the title by which Holcombe was known to the Mohawks. The name had been bestowed upon him in recognition of his acute vision and his remarkable powers of observation. There were few, even among the most noted Mohawk scouts, who could surpass him in the art of following a trail and interpreting the signs of the wilderness.

Kichkinet aroused the village. The sound of his voice brought the dogs rushing noisily toward the stockade. Then voices sounded above the din, and the dogs were driven back. A group of warriors showed themselves in the fire light at the entrance to the camp. They peered suspiciously into the night, and Kichkinet again called to reassure them.

"My brothers, get ready to receive our friends," he cried. "Achawi and To-nes-sa-ah are coming to see you."

"Yes, yes, we know you," replied the Mohawks. "Welcome, brothers; the door of our village is open for you."

They shouted the news through the camp. Kichkinet and his friends advanced to the stockade, and were escorted into the village.

"Achawi has come; Achawi has come!" cried the Mohawks, as they ran from the lodges.

They crowded eagerly about the scouts, shouting greetings and singing songs of welcome. For the moment restraint and dignity were cast off as the Mohawks welcomed the young woodsman who had won their confidence.

"Come, my brothers, we must go to my father," said Kichkinet.

As they walked through the camp, Jim was greeted by many old friends, and even the women and children shouted his name from the doorways of the lodges. Holcombe chuckled gleefully.

"Jim, my lad, you've taken your Dad's place with these people," he said.

"Dan, I never can take Dad's place, but I am glad they trust me," Jim told him.

As they approached the lodge of Ha-yo-went-ha, a deputation of famous men came to meet them. In the company were Short Dog, the uncle of Kichkinet, and Dancing Owl and Little Bear and several others equally prominent. Most of them had served with Jim in the battle at Lake George.

"My brothers, we are glad to see you here," said Short Dog. "Ha-yo-went-ha sent us to bring you to his lodge."

"It is good," replied Jim.

After an exchange of greetings, they were taken to the lodge of the Mohawk chief. Like the other lodges in the village, it was a square one-storied structure fashioned of slabs of bark which were lashed between parallel rows of saplings. There was a door but no windows, and a square hole in the center of the roof for the escape of smoke. The floor was of packed earth, with a shallow fire pit in the center of the solitary room. A platform of poles extended along three sides of the lodge and provided sleeping accommodations for the occupants. Ha-yo-went-ha, and Da-yo-ho-go, the Medicine Man, and aged Da-go-no-we-da, the grandfather of Kichkinet, were seated beside a small fire.

Ha-yo-went-ha, the Mohawk chief, was a tall, slender man of middle age, with strong features, steady eyes, and a dignified bearing that suggested boldness and power, the essentials for leadership among the warlike people who had made him their chief. His head was adorned with a crown of eagle feathers, a handsome pelt of the black bear was drawn about his

shoulders, and his limbs were clothed in decorated buckskin breeches.

Da-yo-ho-go, the Medicine Man, was a deep-chested, powerful man who appeared considerably older than the chief. His face was cold and unfriendly, and his small shifty eyes denoted cruelty and cunning. Both Jim and Holcombe had good cause for mistrusting him. He had dropped the elkskin robe from his shoulders, and the upper portion of his body was decorated with many strange medicine symbols. A snake skin head band encircled his brow, and a single eagle feather was fastened to his scalp lock. He wore buckskin breeches and moccasins decorated with porcupine quills.

Old Da-go-no-we-da was huddled beneath a great bear skin robe, and only his aged face was visible. It was a face imprinted with the indelible record of the years—the ravages of the weather, the deep furrows of fatigue and hardship, the honorable scars of battle—all were there. The eyes alone still showed evidences of life and animation; sunk far back in their hollow sockets, they glowed with a weird, haunting luster that reminded one of the last flickering embers of a dying fire.

"My son, I see that you have brought friends," Ha-yo-went-ha told Kichkinet.

"My father, Achawi and To-nes-sa-ah have come a long ways to talk with you," said Kich-kinet.

The conversation was in the Mohawk tongue, which Jim, after two years of diligent and persistent effort, had finally mastered. Holcombe was a fluent talker in the difficult dialect.

"My brothers, I am glad to see you here," Ha-yo-went-ha said, cordially, as he offered his hand.

"Great chief, we are glad to be with our friends," Jim told him.

Da-yo-ho-go had risen with the chief, but old Da-go-no-we-da still remained huddled beneath his robe. He was peering intently across the fire in an effort to identify the visitors.

"Achawi, many moons have passed since you went away, but I told my people you would return," declared Da-yo-ho-go. "Now you are here, and my words have come true."

At that moment old Da-go-no-we-da called impatiently.

"My brothers, why do you stand so far away from me," he inquired, irritably. "My eyes are old, and I cannot see you. My ears do not catch your words. Who are you? Come over here and let me see you."

They seated themselves before Da-go-no-we-

da. For some moments the aged warrior studied them in silence. Then he began to shake his head and chuckle gleefully.

"Now I know you," he said. "Young man, you are Achawi; your father was my friend. That other man is To-nes-sa-ah. He is a great scout. I have seen him here many times. Tell me what brings you here. I hope you have brought something good for me. I am old and weak, and must have good things to eat."

"Grandfather, I have brought these fat young birds for you," said Kichkinet, as he held a pair of grouse before Da-go-no-we-da.

"Good, good," laughed Da-go-no-we-da. "Tell your grandmother to cook them for me."

"Here is tobacco," said Holcombe.

"Good, good," cried Da-go-no-we-da. "Grandson, bring my pipe."

"And here is something to keep your hands warm," said Jim, as he offered a pair of woolen mittens.

"Hi, hi, Achawi has brought the best thing of all," laughed Da-go-no-we-da, as he drew the mittens upon his hands with childish delight.

They left him and seated themselves on the opposite side of the fire to talk with Ha-yo-went-ha and the warriors who had escorted them to the lodge. Da-yo-ho-go produced the

long stemmed peace pipe which was decorated with the tail feathers of the wild turkey. He lighted the pipe with an ember from the fire, and passed it to Ha-yo-went-ha. The chief smoked, and presented the pipe to Jim. Then it was given to Holcombe, and after he smoked it was passed among the Mohawks.

"My brothers, we have smoked this pipe together, and now it is time to talk," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "I have called you here to tell you about something which troubles me. Do you know about it?"

"Great chief, Kichkinet has told us how your warriors found the tracks of many Indians and two white men," replied Jim. "He has told us that our enemy Ho-sa-ha-ho and his friends were with those Indians. He has told us that they were traveling toward the village of the Shawnees. Come, Ha-yo-went-ha, tell us what you know about this thing."

"My brothers, it looks bad."

"Yes, my friend, it looks bad," said Holcombe.

"Great chief, listen sharp to what I am about to tell you," said Jim. "On the first night of our journey to this village some one circled about our camp. Pretty soon we heard that person make the call of Je-go-sa-sa, the lynx.

Three times that call sounded through the woods. We believe it was a signal. We said, 'That scout is telling his friends about us.' Kichkinet said, 'if we stay here our enemies will come and find us.' Then we went away. We turned from the trail and went a long way toward the-place-where-the-warm-wind-blows. When the night was far gone, we turned back toward the trail which leads to your village. When daylight came, we stopped on the side of a ridge. Pretty soon we saw some people coming along the trail. When they came nearer, we saw that they were warriors, but we could not tell who they were. Then we heard some one coming along the top of the ridge. We hid in the bushes, and watched. Pretty soon two warriors passed. Kichkinet said, 'Ojibwas.'

"Mohawks, we believe those Ojibwas are watching your trail. We believe that Ho-sa-ha-ho sent them there to tell him if any of our people set out for your village. We believe Ho-sa-ha-ho has led a war party to the Shawnees. We believe he will ask the Shawnees to help him. We believe Ho-sa-ha-ho is getting ready to strike. Perhaps he will lead his warriors to kill our people. Perhaps he will lead the Hurons, and Ojibwas, and Shawnees to your

village. My brothers, we have come here to find out about this thing. The Mohawks are our brothers. If Ho-sa-ha-ho comes to fight them, we will help them. If Ho-sa-ha-ho goes to kill my people, our brothers the Mohawks must help us. Now, my friends, I have told you how we feel about this thing."

The Mohawks remained silent. Their sober, thoughtful faces gave evidence that they had been impressed by the solemn warning. They looked searchingly at their chief. Ha-yo-went-ha appeared to be meditating upon the words of the young frontiersman. For a long time he stared thoughtfully at the fire. Scouts and Mohawks waited patiently. At last he spoke.

"Achawi, you have spoken big words," he said. "I believe what you have told us is true. We are trying to find out what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do. Stands Alone and Black Cloud have gone to watch near the Shawnee camp. Our scouts are sharp. I believe they will find out what we wish to know. Then they will tell us about it, and we will know what to do."

"It is good," said Jim.

Then Da-yo-ho-go addressed the company.

"My brothers, this thing looks bad," he said. "If Ho-sa-ha-ho sent the Ojibwas to watch our trail, he must be getting ready to do something

big. I do not know what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do, but I will go to my lodge and think about it. I will talk with the mysterious Medicine People. Perhaps they will tell me about it. Then I will tell you what to do."

Short Dog was the next speaker.

"Brothers, I do not know what will come of this thing, but I will tell you how I feel about it," he said. "Ho-sa-ha-ho is our enemy. Achawi and his people are our friends. If Ho-sa-ha-ho leads his warriors against our friends, we must go to fight him. We have struck the war post against our enemies. We have sent the peace belt to our friends. We are Mohawks. We will do what we have proposed to do."

"Yes, we will help our friends," declared the Mohawks.

"Mohawks, I will keep those words in my heart; I will tell them to my people," Jim said, gratefully.

Soon afterward Jim and Holcombe left the lodge, and Kichkinet accompanied them. They went to a small bark house at the other end of the camp, which Ha-yo-went-ha had set apart for Jim. A fire burned in the fire-pit, and beside it sat Skennek, the young brother of Kichkinet, whom Jim had befriended several years

before. His face lighted with pleasure at sight of Jim.

"Achawi, my brother!" cried Skennek, as he seized Jim's hand.

"Skennek, I am glad to find you here," replied Jim.

He opened the buckskin bag which hung at his side, and brought forth a new skinning knife.

"Skennek, I have brought this knife to you so that you may know that I have been thinking of you," Jim told the Mohawk lad.

Skennek accepted the gift with boyish joy. He went to the platform of poles that extended along one side of the lodge, and drew something from beneath an elkskin robe. Approaching with his hands behind him, his eyes twinkled roguishly as he confronted Jim. He suddenly extended his arms and displayed a pair of decorated moccasins.

"My grandmother made these, and I am going to give them to you," he said.

"My brother, I thank you," said Jim. "When I wear these pretty moccasins, I shall feel very proud. When my people ask about them, I will say, 'My brother Skennek gave them to me.' "

As they sat beside the fire many Mohawks

entered the lodge to talk with them. The night was more than half gone when the last visitor finally departed. Then, as they prepared to sleep, Jim suddenly turned to Holcombe.

"Dan, do you believe Trouville is planning to attack the Mohawks?" he asked, anxiously.

"Bless me, Jim, I wish I could guess," replied Holcombe. "I feel sartin that Trouville is plannin' to strike, but where an' when he'll strike I can't figure out. However, I'm hopin' that Stands Alone an' Black Cloud will guess his plans. When we hear from them perhaps we'll know what to do."

"Perhaps," replied Jim.

CHAPTER IV

THE WA-SA-SEH

THE Mohawks were aroused at dawn by criers who went about the camp with a message from Ha-yo-went-ha.

"Mohawks, we bring you the words of Ha-yo-went-ha," they cried. "Open your ears to receive them. Ha-yo-went-ha says, 'This day we will welcome our brother Achawi. The door of my lodge is open. There is meat over my fire. There will be plenty for all. Mohawks, come to my lodge to meet your brothers Achawi and To-nes-sa-ah. They have come here to talk with you. You must bring them good words.' Mohawks, continue to listen. Ha-yo-went-ha says, 'This feast will continue until the sun goes down. Then our young men will dance the Wa-sa-seh, our great war dance. It will be a great event. All must come together to see it. At that time you will hear about our fight with the Shawnees. You will hear words from our brother Achawi. We propose to make Achawi our war leader. Mohawks, prepare yourselves

for these great ceremonies. All must take part. These are the words of Ha-yo-went-ha.' "

"Jim, lad, do you hear that?" Holcombe cried, gayly, as they stood at the doorway of their lodge. "The Mohawks plan to give you a rousin' welcome.

"Dan, I regret the delay," Jim replied, soberly. "If Trouville and Stockley are at work among the Shawnees, there is little time to be wasted on ceremonies."

"Never fear," Holcombe said, reassuringly. "The Mohawks are too sharp to be caught off their guard. They have sent Stands Alone and Black Cloud to watch the Shawnee camp, and those scouts will bring word the moment Trouville prepares to move. In the meantime the Mohawks will rouse the fightin' spirit of their young men with the Wa-sa-seh, or great war dance."

The Mohawks received the words of Ha-yo-went-ha with enthusiasm, and the village became the scene of bustling activity. Soon after sunrise several fires were lighted before the lodge of Ha-yo-went-ha, and the women began preparations for the feast. As it was the time of the annual hunt the camp was provided with an abundance of game, and each household offered freely of its store.

At midday Kichkinet and Short Dog escorted Jim and Holcombe to the lodge of Ha-yo-went-ha. They found the entire tribe assembled to receive them. It was an interesting and picturesque assemblage, for men, women, and children were arrayed in ceremonial attire. The chief and an escort of famous tribesmen sat apart by themselves, and about them were gathered the warriors. Still farther back were the women and children. Even aged Da-go-no-we-da had tottered from his lodge to show honor to the visitors. Jim and Holcombe were seated beside the chief, and as they joined the council circle, the Mohawks greeted them with songs of friendship.

"Hi, hi, here come our brothers Achawi and To-nes-sa-ah.
Welcome, brothers, we are glad to see you here.
You have come a long ways to see us.
Now you have reached our village and your journey is ended.
Sit beside us, and eat this meat which we have prepared for you.
We hope you will remain here many days."

At the conclusion of the friendship songs old Da-yo-ho-go advanced to the fire with the peace

pipe. Dancing Wolf, a noted warrior, lighted the pipe with an ember. Then for several moments Da-yo-ho-go puffed smoke toward the sky.

"Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, here is sweet smoke for you," he cried. "We have come here to meet our friends. We hope it will please you. Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, you have sent much game to our hunters. Our camp is filled with meat. We have brought it here to share it with our friends. Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, we hope it will please you. Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, continue to help us."

Da-yo-ho-go carried the pipe to Ha-yo-went-ha. The chief smoked and passed the pipe to Jim. Then it was presented to Holcombe. After the guests had smoked, the pipe was passed among the warriors. When the last man had smoked, Ha-yo-went-ha addressed the company.

"My brothers, this is a great day," he said. "We have come here to welcome our brothers Achawi and To-nes-sa-ah. I have called them to my lodge to smoke the pipe of friendship, and eat meat at my fire. Mohawks, I have called you here to meet them. I hope you have come here with good hearts. I hope you have brought good words for our brothers."

"Yes, yes," cried the Mohawks.

"It is good," declared Ha-yo-went-ha. "Now before we begin this ceremony, I am going to ask our brother Achawi to give you some words."

The Mohawks looked approvingly upon the tall young frontiersman who had risen to address them. Three years of intimate association had convinced those stern warriors of the wilderness that Jim, like his father and Colonel Johnson, was a man whom they might trust. His honesty, loyalty, and courage had been tested and found true, and besides Jim had won an enviable reputation as a brave and skillful leader.

"Achawi is a man," the Mohawks told one another.

For some moments Jim studied the great company of Mohawks in silence. His eyes moved slowly along the circle of warriors, lingering for a brief interval on the stern fearless face of each famous veteran of the war trail. Jim read an unmistakable message of friendship in each pair of flashing black eyes, and he thrilled with pride as he realized that those dauntless warriors had accepted him as their friend and brother.

"My friends, your chief has called this a

great day—it is true," Jim told the Mohawks. "To-nes-sa-ah and I are glad to be here. We are glad to see so many friends assembled here to meet us. The great wampum belt binds us together. It is good. We are brothers. Mohawks, To-nes-sa-ah and Achawi have come here for a big talk. Pretty soon we will tell you what has brought us here."

As Jim finished speaking, Ha-yo-went-ha called to the women at the fires.

"Come, women, bring food," he commanded. "Our brothers have come a long way to see us, and they are hungry."

It was the signal for the opening of the feast, and the women moved slowly around the circle carrying great iron trade kettles containing broth. A wooden ladle was suspended at the side of the kettle, and each warrior dipped into the broth and drank as much as he desired. Then great portions of venison were passed among the warriors who immediately drew their knives and provided themselves with generous rations. The feast was continued without interruption, and there appeared to be no limit either to the amount of food which had been prepared, or the capacity of the Mohawks. Jim and Holcombe, however, eventually found themselves in an awkward position. Unable to

continue eating, they feared that withdrawal from the feast might give serious offense to the Mohawk chief and his warriors.

"Dan, I cannot possibly eat more and live through it," Jim finally told Holcombe.

"Tut, tut, lad, don't insult our friends," Holcombe cautioned, anxiously. "Take small portions an' eat slow. It's the only chance of holdin' out to the finish."

"Let's hope it will soon end," said Jim.

The sun was far down in the west when Ha-yo-went-ha finally rose and raised his hand for silence. The Mohawks gave instant attention. The feast had come to its end. Jim and Holcombe felt relieved.

"My friends, the day is almost gone," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "It is time to stop eating. I am glad to see so many friends sitting about my fire. I hope that all have had plenty to eat."

"Hi, hi," responded the Mohawks.

"It is good," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "I hope that all will go away from my fire feeling strong and happy."

"Hi, hi," responded the Mohawks.

"It is good," replied the chief. "Pretty soon it will be time for the great ceremony at the Council Lodge. We must prepare ourselves to take part in it."

After Ha-yo-went-ha had finished speaking, Jim again rose to speak.

"Great chief, before we go from your fire I must tell you how we feel about this thing," he said. "You have opened the gate of your village and asked us to enter. You have shared your food with us. You have given us a lodge. Your people have sung the friendship songs. Your warriors have given us good words. Great chief, these things have warmed our hearts. We know that the brave Mohawks are our brothers. May it ever be so. Mohawks, I promise that as long as I live I shall do my best to keep the peace belt that binds us together strong and bright. Achawi has spoken."

"Hi, hi, Achawi has given us good words," cried the Mohawks. "Achawi is our brother."

A few moments later the company dispersed, and Jim and Holcombe returned to their lodge. They were undisturbed until the end of the day, when they heard some one singing before their door. Drawing aside the door cover, they saw Kichkinet and a company of warriors assembled before the lodge. All were painted and attired for a ceremony.

"My brothers, it is time to go to the Council Lodge," said Kichkinet.

"Now for the big time," laughed Holcombe.

They went to the center of the village, and found the Mohawks assembled about a great fire before the council lodge.

"Achawi, we are about to begin the great war ceremony," said Ha-yo-went ha. "You must watch sharp so that you may tell your people about it."

He spoke to Da-yo-ho-go, and the Medicine Man moved to the fire and lighted the sacred Medicine Pipe. He opened a small buckskin bag and tossed several handfuls of sweet grass into the flames. As it burned, he raised his face toward the heavens and made his prayer to Areskoui, the war god of the Iroquois.

"Great Areskoui, here is sweet smoke to please you," he said. "I have lighted the sacred Medicine Pipe for you. Great Areskoui, I hope you will feel good toward us. I hope you will listen to what I am about to say. We have come here to do a big thing. Before we go ahead with it I must tell you what we propose to do. Great Areskoui, you are the great war chief. You are the one who gave us power to overcome our enemies. Great Areskoui, we thank you. You have done many big things for us. You have made us stronger than the boastful Shawnees. Great Areskoui, we thank you. We know that you wish your children to be

strong and brave. It is good. Great Areskoui, we know that the war cry is sweet music for your ears. We know that you like to hear the war drums and the war songs. Great Areskoui, you have been good to us, and we wish to please you. Pretty soon our warriors will dance the Wa-sa-seh, our great war dance. Then you will hear the war cries; you will hear the war drums; you will hear the war songs. Great Areskoui, you will hear how we overcame the boastful Shawnees. Great Areskoui, we hope it will please you.

"Now, Great Areskoui, I will tell you what brings us together in this place. A young man has come to our village. He is our brother. He is a brave warrior. He has done big things. He led our warriors in that fight with the Shawnees. He was very brave. He is a great leader. We call this young man Achawi. Great Areskoui, we believe you sent him here to help us. It is good. Now we propose to make him our war leader. Great Areskoui, we hope it will please you. Great Areskoui, we hope you will continue to help us."

At the end of his appeal Da-yo-ho-go seated himself beside the Mohawk chief. The Mohawks were silent. It was some time before Ha-yo-went-ha finally spoke.

"My brothers, the great war ceremony is about to begin," he said. "Pretty soon the dancers will appear. Then we will sing the war songs. I hope that all will take part so that Great Areskoui will hear us. If any of you have done anything big you must tell about it at this ceremony. Now, my friends, prepare yourselves to take part in our great war ceremony."

The Mohawks looked expectantly toward the door of the Council Lodge. It was not long before they heard the slow, solemn refrain of the war song. Then the bear skin robe was drawn from the doorway, and the dancers came from the lodge. There were thirty in the company, and each was famous for his exploits on the war trail. They made a weird and striking appearance as they advanced slowly through the council circle and assembled about the fire. Naked, except for the buckskin breech cloth, their faces and bodies were streaked with a mixture of charcoal and clay, and their scalp locks were ornamented with hawk feathers. They wore buckskin anklets and knee bands to which were attached deer hoofs which rattled musically at each step. Each dancer carried his bow and tomahawk. Kichkinet appeared to be the leader.

When the dancers had assembled, three old men came from the lodge with the war drums. They, too, were naked, and their bodies were streaked with broad bands of red and black. They stood within the circle of dancers and appeared to be waiting for Ha-yo-went-ha to address them.

"My brothers, I see that you are ready to begin the Wa-sa-seh," he said. "I am glad to see so many taking part. You look very brave, and I know that you are as brave as you look. My friends, we have come here to see you dance the Wa-sa-seh. I hope you will do your best to please us. Now it is time to begin."

The old men tapped softly on the war drums, and the dancers stood at attention. Then, after an impressive interval of silence, the musicians chanted the opening strains of the war song, and the warriors moved slowly about the fire. They advanced with short mincing steps, stamping their feet to shake the rattles about their ankles, and keeping time with the beating of the war drums. The music was slow and solemn, and the dancers conducted themselves with formal dignity. When they had circled several times about the fire, Dancing Wolf, one of the spectators, struck the ground with a stick and announced that he desired to speak. The music

ceased, and the dancers stood quietly in their places.

"Friends and relatives, listen to my words for I must tell you what is in my heart," cried Dancing Wolf. "I am glad to see so many of my friends taking part in this dance. I see that Kichkinet is the leader. It is good. Kichkinet is a great warrior. I saw him do many big things in that fight with the Shawnees. I saw him strike down many enemies. I was close beside him. That is how I come to know about it.

"Friends and relatives, continue to listen. I saw many brave men in that fight. One of the bravest was our brother Achawi. He was the leader. He stayed out in front. The Shawnees tried hard to kill him, but he was too sharp for them. Achawi kept calling us to go ahead. We followed him until the Shawnees ran away like frightened rabbits. I have been in many battles. I have followed many brave war leaders, but I have never seen a braver man than Achawi. Now I have told you what I have to say about that great fight."

As Dancing Wolf finished his talk, the musicians began the war chant and the dance was resumed. Moment by moment the music grew more lively, and the dancers quickened their

steps to keep time with the rapid throbbing of the war drums. It was not long before the solemn dignity of the dance passed, and the Mohawks responded to the stirring appeal of the war song. Freed from restraint, they raised their voices in the defiant war cry of the great Iroquois Confederation, and surrendered themselves to the wild antics which characterized the war dance. Shouting boastful threats against their foes, they capered madly about the fire mimicking their exploits upon the war trail. There was no further attempt to dance in unison, for each warrior appeared concerned only in offering a vivid illustration of his personal achievements. All, however, kept time with the rhythm of the war song. Their enthusiasm soon spread to the spectators, and in a few moments the camp was in an uproar. The piercing whoops of the dancers, the excited shouts of the onlookers, and the fierce barking of the dogs rose in a deafening clamor that carried a sinister warning far away into the perilous black solitudes of the wilderness.

While the dance was at its climax, Kichkinet suddenly left his place among the dancers and rushed to Jim. He led the young frontiersman into the center of the circle of Mohawks and called upon the dancers to stop. The command

instantly brought the tumult to an end. Then Kichkinet began to speak.

"My friends, before we go ahead with this thing I must tell you what we propose to do," he said. "You all know this man who stands beside me."

"Achawi," shouted the Mohawks.

"Achawi is our friend," Kichkinet told them. "Achawi has come here to help us. His words are good. What he says is true. Now, my friends, we are about to do a big thing for Achawi. My father will tell you about it."

Ha-yo-went-ha and Da-yo-ho-go and Short Dog and several other renowned leaders advanced into the center of the circle and stood before Jim.

"Achawi, you have done many things to help my people," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "Our hearts are good toward you. We have made you our brother. We have given you a lodge in our village. Now we propose to do something better. We are about to make you our war leader. We believe that Great Areskoui sent you here to help us. You must lead us against our enemies."

When Ha-yo-went-ha finished speaking, Kichkinet brought a headdress of hawk feathers, and Ha-yo-went-ha placed it upon Jim's head.

Then Da-yo-ho-go fastened a necklace of bear claws about Jim's neck.

"Achawi, you are as brave as Nya-gwaih, the bear," he said. "That is why I am hanging this thing about your neck. You must always wear it when you go to meet our enemies. It will keep you from harm."

Kichkinet came forward with a small wooden bowl which contained a mixture of charcoal and clay. He dipped his fingers in the bowl and streaked Jim's face with the black symbol of war.

"Mohawks, here stands our great war leader, Achawi," cried Ha-yo-went-ha.

The Mohawks acclaimed their new leader with the ringing war cry of the tribe. Then they called upon Achawi to address them.

"Mohawks, I came among you as your friend, and you accepted me as your brother," said Jim. "I have lived in your village; I have sat in your councils; I have joined you on your war trails. Now you have made me your war leader. My brothers, I am proud to be the leader of the brave Mohawks. Now listen sharp to what I am about to tell you. You have made me a war leader, but I am also Achawi, He-who-settles-disputes. There must be no disputes between your people and my people. We must

live as brothers. We must keep the peace belt bright and strong. We must help each other and stand together against our enemies. Then no harm can come upon us. It is the wish of your brother the Great White Chief. It is the wish of his people. It is the wish of Achawi.

"Now, my brothers, I will tell you why Tones-sa-ah and I have come to your village. Kichkinet has told us that you believe our enemy Ho-sa-ha-ho and his friends have gone to the Shawnees. It looks bad. We feel troubled about it. We have come here for a big talk. We must try to find out what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do. Ha-yo-went-ha has told us that our brothers Stands Alone and Black Cloud are watching the Shawnee camp. It is good. We believe those great scouts will soon bring word about Ho-sa-ha-ho. Then we will know what to do."

"Achawi is a good leader," the Mohawks told one another. "He speaks like a great chief."

A few moments later the war dance was resumed with even greater enthusiasm as the warriors danced wildly about their new leader. As the dance continued and the excitement increased, many of the spectators joined the dancers and even Jim and Holcombe were led

into the circle to take part in the ceremony. The night was far gone when the celebration finally came to an end, and the tired scouts were permitted to return to the privacy of their lodge.

CHAPTER V

A WARNING

WHEN the scouts came from the lodge the following morning they found Kichkinet awaiting them. He said that old Da-yo-ho-go had called the people to the Council Lodge to tell them of a dream in which he had talked with the mysterious Medicine People.

"Perhaps Da-yo-ho-go has found out what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do," Kichkinet said, impressively.

When they reached the Council Lodge they found the warriors seated in several circles about the council fire. Even the women and children had crowded into the lodge and stood along the walls in awed silence. Jim and Holcombe were invited to sit with Ha-yo-went-ha and the foremost men of the tribe. Jim looked for Da-yo-ho-go. He was absent. The Mohawks appeared to be awaiting him.

In a few moments Da-yo-ho-go entered the lodge and advanced solemnly into the council circle. He had decorated his face and body

with strange Medicine Symbols, and about his neck he wore a necklace of tokens and charms which were believed to give him power over the Evil Ones. In his hand he carried the sacred Medicine Pipe. He lighted the pipe at the fire and puffed smoke toward the earth, the heavens and each of the four winds. Then he began the Ga-no-dah, or sacred Medicine Song.

"Great Medicine People, watch over us.
Great Medicine People, drive away all bad things.
Great Medicine People, help us against our enemies.
Great Medicine People, give us mysterious power."

When he had finished the Medicine Song, Da-yo-ho-go opened a small bag and threw a handful of sacred herbs into the fire. He held his hands in the smoke and pretended to rub it upon his body. Having thus fortified himself against the power of any evil spirits that might have entered the lodge, he began his talk to the Mohawks.

"My brothers, I have called you here to tell you what has happened to me," he said. "I have talked with the mysterious Medicine People. Now listen sharp and I will tell you

about it. After the great war ceremony I went to my lodge and sat down beside my fire. Pretty soon I fell asleep. Then I heard some one calling out my name. I looked around, but it was dark, and I could not see any one. Then that person who had talked to me began to sing:

'I am O-da-wa-an-do, the Great Medicine Otter.
I have come here to talk with my brother Da-yo-ho-go.
I have come here so that Da-yo-ho-go may help his people.
Come, Da-yo-ho-go, stir your fire and light your pipe.'

"When I heard O-da-wa-an-do singing that song, I raked the embers together and threw wood on the fire. Then O-da-wa-an-do came over and sat down beside me. I passed the sacred Medicine Pipe and O-da-wa-an-do smoked. Then he began to talk. Now my brothers, listen sharp while I give you his words.

" 'Da-yo-ho-go, you are a great Medicine Person,' said O-da-wa-an-do. 'All great Medicine People are brothers. That is why I have come here to help you. Your people are in danger, but I have come here in time to warn you. Da-yo-ho-go, your enemies are about to come against you. They are coming from Ha-ga-

kwas-ga, the-place-where-the-sun-sleeps. There are many warriors. A white man is the leader. Da-yo-ho-go, you must call your people together, and tell them what I have told you. Keep the women and children and old people in the village. If they go into the woods, your enemies may catch them. Tell your warriors to watch sharp. Now, my brother, I have warned you what is about to happen.'

"When O-da-wa-an-do finished his talk he jumped over the fire, and everything was dark again. I called after him but he did not speak. Then I knew that O-da-wa-an-do had gone. I took a stick and stirred the fire. There was nothing left but ashes. Then I went to the door of the lodge. I heard the dogs making a big noise at the other end of the camp. I said, 'O-da-wa-an-do has gone by that place.' Now, my brothers, I have told you about this thing."

Da-yo-ho-go ended his story and seated himself before the council fire. He sat with his head bowed upon his breast, and appeared gloomy and depressed. The Mohawks were silent, but there was an angry glow in the eyes of the warriors which gave warning that they were ready and eager to meet their foes. A long interval of silence passed before Ha-yo went-ha finally spoke.

"My brothers, you have heard the words of Da-yo-ho-go," he said. "He has given us the words of O-da-wa-an-do, the Great Medicine Otter. Da-yo-ho-go has done a big thing. He is a great Medicine Person. Now, my brothers, we must do exactly as O-da-wa-an-do tells us to do. Then if Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brothers the Shawnees come here, we will be ready for them. I believe that our brothers Stands Alone and Black Cloud will soon tell us about this thing. Then we will know what to do about it."

Ha-yo-went-ha had barely ceased speaking when a shrill cry rang through the camp, and a moment afterward an old man appeared in the doorway of the Council Lodge, and called out excitedly.

"The great War Bird is flying over the village," he cried. "He is making the war cry. Come out and see for yourselves."

The Mohawks rushed from the lodge and looked anxiously into the sky. A white headed eagle was soaring directly above the camp. In a few moments the bird screamed, and the Mohawks nodded soberly.

"Yes, it is the war cry," they said.

"My brothers, you see that my words have come true," old Da-yo-ho-go cried, boastfully. "O-da-wa-an-do has sent the great War Bird

to warn us. See, he is moving toward the village of our enemies, the Shawnees."

The eagle had suddenly turned toward the west. The superstitious Mohawks attached much importance to the flight of the War Bird.

"The War Bird tells us where to look for our enemies," they cried.

They watched until the eagle finally disappeared behind a high hill to the westward, and then they began to make plans for the defense of the camp. Although neither Jim nor Holcombe gave any credence to the dream of old Da-yo-ho-go they had no thought of offending the Mohawks by scoffing at their superstitions. Besides, the scouts believed that it might be a wise precaution to place the Mohawk camp in readiness against an attack. At Jim's suggestion, the women and boys were sent to the river to carry a supply of water into the camp.

"Jim, I sort o' feel uneasy like, myself, about the action of that war eagle," Holcombe said, seriously. "I'm thinkin' of the time the bird flew over our camp when we were with Broken Face and his warriors on the march to Fort Duquesne. It sure meant trouble that time, an' plenty of it, an' I believe it means trouble now."

"Dan, you are almost as superstitious as the Mohawks," laughed Jim.

"Mebbe so, Jim," replied Holcombe.

They were interrupted by the shouts of those who had gone to the river, and soon afterward Stands Alone, one of the scouts, entered the camp. He was wet with sweat and showed evidence of fast traveling. He hastened to the lodge of Ha-yo-went-ha, and Jim and Holcombe joined the great company of Mohawks that assembled to hear the report of the scout.

"Stands Alone has found out what we wish to know," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "Now he will tell you about it."

"My friends, we must get ready to fight," declared Stands Alone. "Ho-sa-ha-ho is leading a great war party against us. There are many warriors. Our enemies the Ojibwas are with the Shawnees. Black Cloud stayed behind to watch, but I ran ahead to warn you. You must decide what is to be done. There is little time. Our enemies are traveling fast. Before the end of the next sun they will be close upon our village."

As Stands Alone finished speaking, Da-yo-ho-go rose and began to talk excitedly.

"Mohawks you see that my words are about to come true," he cried, "I found out about this thing and told you about it. I gave you the warning of O-da-wa-an-do. Now I am going

to do a big thing. I am going to my lodge to smoke the sacred Medicine Pipe and talk with the mysterious Medicine People. Do not disturb me. When I have found out what I wish to know, I will tell you what to do."

Da-yo-ho-go left the council circle, and walked slowly toward his lodge. Then Ha-yo-went-ha addressed the company.

"My brothers, now we know what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do," he said. "It is as Da-yo-ho-go told us. Before the end of the next sun our enemies will be here. It is bad. We must get ready to fight. We must send scouts to keep watch on our enemies. We must close the gate of our village. Then we will wait for Ho-sa-ha-ho."

"Brothers, the words of Ha-yo-went-ha are good," said Short Dog, the uncle of Kichkinet. "There is much to be done. We must be quick. I am glad to know that Achawi is here. Achawi is our war leader. Achawi is too sharp for our enemies. I believe that Achawi will know what to do. Now I am going to ask Achawi to tell us how he feels about this thing."

"It is good," agreed the Mohawks. "We will listen to the words of Achawi."

"My brothers, the words of Ha-yo-went-ha are good," said Jim. "We must send scouts to

find our enemies. Then when they come here we will be ready for them. I believe we will be able to keep them out of the village, and drive them away. Now, my brothers, I will ask Ha-yo-went-ha to choose the warriors who will go to watch our enemies."

Ha-yo-went-ha had difficulty in selecting the scouts as almost every man in the tribe was eager to enlist in the company. However, the chief finally chose Kichkinet, and Stands Alone, and Dancing Wolf. Kichkinet was made the leader.

"My brothers, you are about to go in search of our enemies," Ha-yo-went-ha told them. "Keep watching them, but do not make a fight. Try to find out how many warriors are with Ho-sa-ha-ho. When they come near our village, you must come back and tell us so that we will be ready for them."

The Mohawks painted their faces with the symbol of war and passed the remainder of the day singing the war songs and dancing about the war post in the center of the camp. In the meantime Jim kept the women and boys at work carrying water into the village. Everything that would hold water was filled, and the camp was provided with a supply sufficient for several days.

Shortly before sunset Kichkinet and his companions left the village. The Mohawks assembled at the edge of the camp and sang the war songs.

"Well, lad, it looks sort o' like the War Bird means what he says," chuckled Holcombe.

"Dan, that is foolish superstition," replied Jim.

"Mebbe so," said Holcombe.

CHAPTER VI

PLANS FOR DEFENSE

THE following day was one of trying suspense for the Mohawks. At dawn they began preparations for the defense of their village. Protected by a strong guard of warriors, the women and boys collected a great quantity of dry wood and brush, which was distributed in piles through the center of the camp, to be lighted if the Shawnees should attack during the night. Later in the day sentinels were stationed in the woods about the village to watch for the approach of hostile scouts, who might have left the war party and eluded Kichkinet and his companions. Then the great log gate was closed and barred, and the Mohawks waited for their scouts to bring word of the enemy.

The younger warriors painted themselves for war and paraded noisily about the village, singing the war songs and shouting fierce threats against their foes. The older men, however, were calm and serious and appeared to realize the peril which threatened them. Having learned that the Ojibwas had joined the Shaw-

nees, they feared that the combined war party would greatly outnumber their own force. The thought made them anxious, for they knew that their hated foes, the Shawnees, would make a determined effort to avenge the defeat which they had suffered at the hands of Achawi and his Mohawk scouts at the battle of Lake George.

"The Shawnees are very mad; they will make a great fight," said Short Dog.

"Perhaps our brother, Achawi, will call his people to help us," proposed Little Bear, a noted scout.

"We will ask Achawi about it," said Short Dog.

Ha-yo-went-ha called Jim and Holcombe to his lodge to discuss the advisability of asking aid from the garrison at Lake George.

"My brothers, To-nes-sa-ah and I have talked about it, but we believe it would be foolish," Jim told the Mohawks. "I will tell you how we feel about it. It is four sun's travel to the great lake, and four sun's travel back to your village. That is a long time. We do not believe our people could reach us in time to join in the fight. Besides, my brothers, To-nes-sa-ah and I are thinking about those Ojibwa scouts we found along the trail. Perhaps Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to fool us. We must watch out. Now

listen sharp while I tell you how we feel about this thing. Perhaps Ho-sa-ha-ho is leading the Shawnees and Ojibwas against your camp to fool my people. Perhaps Ho-sa-ha-ho says, 'I will lead this great war party toward the Mohawk camp. When the Mohawks see so many warriors they will call their white brothers to help them. When the soldiers leave the fort to help their brothers, the Mohawks, my scouts will run ahead and tell me. They will also tell my brothers, the Hurons. Then the Hurons will travel down the great lake, and I will lead my warriors through the woods to join them. Then we will burn the fort and go far down into the country of our enemies.'

"My brothers, this is how To-nes-sa-ah and I feel about this thing. My people cannot come here in time to help us in this fight, and we believe it would be foolish to call them from the fort. Ho-sa-ha-ho is sharp. We must make this fight alone. Then if Ho-sa-ha-ho has set his trap to catch my people, he will see that the Mohawks were too sharp for him. Mohawks, this is how we feel about it."

"My brothers, the words of Achawi are good," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "What he says is true. His people are far away, and there is little time. Now I see that they cannot help

us in this fight. Before the night passes I believe our enemies will be here. If Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do what Achami has told about we will laugh at him. He will see that we were too sharp to lead our white brothers into his trap. He will see that the Mohawks are strong enough to fight alone. My brothers, some of you wish to call our brothers, the Oneidas, to help us. It is useless. There is not time. Four suns must pass before our brothers could reach here. I believe the fight will be over before that time. Mohawks, we must fight alone."

"Yes, we must fight alone," agreed the Mohawks. "Our friends cannot come in time to help us."

The day was more than half gone before old Da-yo-ho-go finally appeared from his lodge. He claimed to have had another talk with the Medicine People, and he asked the Mohawks to assemble to hear his words.

"My friends, I have talked some more with O-da-wa-an-do, and have more to tell you," he said, impressively. "It was just as I told you. O-da-wa-an-do sent the great War Bird here to warn us. O-da-wa-an-do says that our scouts have found our enemies. Pretty soon Kichkinet will send some one to tell us about it. O-da-wa-an-do says we must watch sharp. He

says this will be a great fight. He says we must keep ourselves shut up in the village. O-da-wa-an-do says he will give our warriors mysterious power. He says he will help us against our enemies. O-da-wa-an-do says our enemies will try to fool us. He says they will try to draw us out of the village. O-da-wa-an-do says we must not try to follow them. He says if we do that, many of our warriors will be killed. Now, my friends, I have told you the words of O-da-wa-an-do."

"It is good," cried the Mohawks. "O-da-wa-an-do will help us. We will overcome our enemies."

The day was near its end when the Mohawks suddenly heard the short, husky bark of the little gray fox, from the edge of the woods to the north of the camp. They listened anxiously until the call sounded three times. Then they knew it was a signal from one of the sentinels.

"Some one is coming," they said.

Soon afterward Dancing Wolf, one of the warriors who had gone with Kichkinet, appeared before the barred gate of the camp. As he entered the village, the Mohawks crowded about him for word of the war party.

"My brothers, our enemies are nearby," said

Dancing Wolf. "When night comes they will be close about our camp. It is a great war party. What Stands Alone told you is true. There are many Ojibwas with the Shawnees. Their faces are painted black, and they are singing the war songs. Shawnee scouts are moving ahead. Pretty soon they will meet our brothers who are watching out there in the woods. Kichkinet and Stands Alone and Black Cloud are following the war party. Black Cloud was very brave. He was close to the Shawnee camp. He has found out some big things. Pretty soon you will hear about it. Now, my brothers, I will go back and tell Kichkinet that you are ready. You must keep watching. When it grows dark, we will come back. Do not open the gate until you hear the call of the little gray fox. Then listen sharp. If you hear that call three times, you will know that we have come."

Dancing Wolf left the camp and vanished into the woods. The Mohawks were anxious and serious, as they realized that the hour of peril was close at hand. The frightened women and children were taken to the lodges in the center of the camp. Then Achawi was asked to take command. He immediately stationed sentinels upon the narrow platform which extended along

the inside of the stockade. Then he assembled the warriors and issued his orders.

"My brothers, you have made me your war leader, and you must listen to my words," he said. "We are about to fight our enemies. We must be brave, but we must also be cautious. No one must leave the camp until I call out to do so. If we remain behind these strong logs that surround our village, few of us will be killed. I do not believe Ho-sa-ha-ho will come close to the camp before it grows dark. Then we must watch out. Now I will tell you what I propose to do. When it grows dark, I will send two boys to each lodge, with pine branches and water. If our enemies shoot fire arrows into the camp, those boys must climb to the tops of the lodges and beat out those fire arrows. I will also send two boys to stand beside each pile of brush. When I call out, they must light those piles of brush so that we may see our enemies. Now call the boys, and I will tell them what to do."

"Achawi is a great leader," the Mohawks declared, approvingly.

The boys were assembled, and Jim assigned them to their duties. Skennek, the young brother of Kichkinet, was made the leader.

"Achawi, I will do as you tell me to do, but

I would like to fight the Shawnees," Skennek said, eagerly.

"Skennek, you are very brave," Jim replied, kindly.

Having given his instructions, Jim went to find Dan Holcombe. He found him in the lodge, loading his rifle. He looked up and chuckled with boyish enthusiasm as Jim entered.

"Jim, what are the chances for a fight?" inquired Dan.

"Excellent," laughed Jim. "The report of Dancing Wolf has about convinced me that Trouville really intends to attack the Mohawks."

"I'm sort o' figurin' on it, myself," said Holcombe. "However, I can't guess the reason for that kind of a play."

"Perhaps it is the beginning of a general campaign against the Iroquois camps, with the idea of opening the way for the French to reach the settlements without risking a decisive battle at the lake," suggested Jim.

"That sounds likely," agreed Dan. "Well, if I can get one crack at Trouville, I'll wager he'll be missin' from the attackin' party at the next camp."

"Dan, when fighting actually begins, I fear it will require a long shot to reach either Trou-

ville or Stockley," Jim told him. "They are playing for big stakes from the French, and they are unlikely to risk losing the reward for their efforts by exposing themselves to peril. I believe Trouville will send his Indians against the camp, while he and Stockley keep well beyond danger."

"Mebbe so," replied Holcombe.

CHAPTER VII

THE ATTACK

AT sunset Ha-yo-went-ha ordered the usual evening fires lighted and called the women from the lodges to prepare food. The children were reassured and enticed to play about the village, and the warriors walked about the camp laughing and singing with little evidence of anxiety.

"We will fool our enemies," Ha-yo-went-ha told Jim. "If Shawnee scouts are close by, they will see the smoke from our fires and hear the noise from the camp. They will go back to their brothers and say, 'It is good—the foolish Mohawks do not know about us. Come, the way is clear.' "

"It is good," replied Jim.

However, as the evening shadows fell upon the camp, the Mohawks prepared themselves for the encounter which they believed was close at hand. The women and children were sent to the lodges, and, while the old men kept up the fires, the warriors assembled silently along the stockade. Then a sudden hush fell upon the

village as the Mohawks listened anxiously for the signal from their scouts. It was not long before they heard the bark of the little gray fox before the gate of the stockade.

"Our brothers have come," said Ha-yo-went-ha.

When the signal had been repeated three times, the gate was opened, and Kichkinet and his companions entered the village. The sentinels who had been watching in the woods came with them. It was evident that their foes were near at hand.

"My brothers, our enemies are close by, on that side of the camp," said Kichkinet, pointing toward the north. "They are waiting out there in the woods. The scouts are circling around us."

"Did the scouts find you?" Ha-yo-went-ha inquired, anxiously.

"No, my father," replied Kichkinet. "We heard them moving ahead, but we kept out of sight, and they did not see us."

"It is good," replied Ha-yo-went-ha. "Black Cloud, our brother Stands Alone says you were very brave. He says you were close to the Shawnee camp. He says you found out some big things. Come, Black Cloud, tell us what you have found out."

"Great Chief, I saw Ho-sa-ha-ho in the Shawnee camp," said Black Cloud. "There were many Ojibwas with Ho-sa-ha-ho. When it got dark the Shawnees and the Ojibwas came together for a big talk. I crept up close to the camp. Stands Alone wanted to go with me, but I told him to stay back and watch. Ho-sa-ha-ho made a big talk to the Shawnees. He said the Mohawks felt very big about that fight at the great lake. He said when he heard that so many of his brothers, the Shawnees, were killed it made him very mad. He said he told the Ojibwas about it. He said he asked the Ojibwas to come with him to help the Shawnees and wipe out the Mohawks. He said the Mohawks did not know anything about it. He said many Mohawks had gone away to help their white brothers. Yes, Ho-sa-ha-ho told those words to the Shawnees to fool them and make them feel brave. He said it would be easy to break into the Mohawk village.

"After Ho-sa-ha-ho stopped talking, the Shawnee chief talked. He said the words of Ho-sa-ha-ho were good. He said he was glad to see the Ojibwas in his village. He said they would go to fight the Mohawks.

"Then many Shawnees talked. All of them wished to go to fight the Mohawks. Then many

Ojibwas talked. All of them wished to go to fight the Mohawks. Then they began to sing the war songs and talk very big. Then I went back and told Stands Alone about it. He came here to tell you about it. Now our enemies are here. It is a great war party. That is all I have to say. Now I am ready to fight."

"Black Cloud, what do you believe our enemies propose to do?" asked Jim.

"My brother, I believe they propose to wait out there in the woods until they believe we are asleep," replied Black Cloud. "Then they will creep up to the village. Their scouts are watching close by."

While he spoke several owls began to hoot somewhere in the woods to the northward of the camp. The Mohawks ceased talking, to listen. Although the calls were well imitated, the Mohawks had no doubt that they were signals passing between the Shawnee scouts.

"They'll hoot louder than that before we get through with 'em," Holcombe told Jim.

The sounds had ceased, but the Mohawks continued to listen. Jim sent the boys to their posts. The warriors lined the stockade on all four sides of the village. A strong force kept guard at the gate.

"They'll not come yet," said Holcombe.

"They'll wait until they believe the camp is asleep."

"At any rate we shall be prepared," replied Jim.

As they heard nothing further from their foes, they felt certain that the signals had been made by scouts reconnoitering about the vicinity of the camp. It seemed probable that the Shawnees were attempting to learn if sentinels were watching beyond the village. It was not long, however, before the warriors at the north end of the camp heard some one moving cautiously toward the stockade. The dogs began to bark furiously, and the prowlers retreated. Then for a long time all was quiet.

"Perhaps Ho-sa-ha-ho is waiting to catch us asleep," laughed Short Dog.

"He will see that we are not so foolish," replied Ha-yo-went-ha.

When the night was half gone, and their enemies had failed to attack, the Mohawks allowed the fires to die down. Then, as darkness slowly settled upon the camp, they redoubled their vigilance. The night hush had fallen upon the wilderness, and all was still. The Mohawks waited for a warning of their foes.

"Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brothers are cautious," said Kichkinet.

"Perhaps they know that we are prepared to fight," suggested Jim.

"No," replied Kichkinet. "They are afraid the dogs will hear them. When the dogs quiet down, they will come."

Soon afterward they again heard an owl to the westward of the village. The cry echoed weirdly through the night and carried a sinister warning to the listening Mohawks.

"Now watch out," cautioned Kichkinet.

The sentinels along the stockade listened sharply but heard nothing to warn them that their enemies were approaching. The heavens were starless, and it was impossible to see beyond the camp. The Mohawks realized that it would be easy for the war party to reach the stockade without being discovered. The possibility kept them in suspense.

"It is bad," Ha-yo-went-ha said, uneasily.

As he spoke, a warning came from the warriors who guarded the gate. The enemy was at the stockade.

"Light the fires!" shouted Jim.

As the boys thrust glowing embers into the dry grass at the bottom of the brush piles, a wild bedlam of sounds rose outside the stockade. Aware that they had been discovered, the Shawnees and Ojibwas raised the war cry and

stormed the camp. They had surrounded the village, and while a company of Shawnees used a heavy log as a battering ram against the gate, their companions attempted to scale the stockade. Many actually gained the top and were preparing to leap into the camp when they were struck down by the Mohawks. Then, as the flames roared through the brush piles and flooded the village with light, the Mohawks were able to send a deadly volley against their foes. The latter immediately retreated into the shadows, and for the moment the attack was ended. The Mohawks escaped without loss, although two warriors were slightly wounded in the hand to hand fight with their foes at the top of the stockade. A number of the enemy had been killed or wounded, but were carried into the darkness by their companions. Having so successfully driven off their foes, the Mohawks felt more confident.

"Now Ho-sa-ha-ho knows that we are awake," laughed Ha-yo-went-ha.

Elated at their success, the Mohawks sounded their war cry and shouted taunts and threats at their foes. The Shawnees and Objiwas replied to the challenge, and the night was turned into a pandemonium of piercing yells and whoops that struck terror into the hearts of the cower-

ing women and children in the Mohawk lodges.

"Hi, you Shawnees; hi, you Ojibwas; we thought you came here to fight, but we see that you are not brave enough to go ahead with it," jeered the Mohawks. "Where is your great war leader, Ho-sa-ha-ho? We did not see him. Did he run away and hide behind a tree?"

"The Mohawks are like chattering squirrels that run to their village when their enemies come," shouted the Shawnees. "We are waiting here to see if you are brave enough to come out and fight. There is no use holding back. If you do not come out, we propose to break into your village and kill you."

"Come, come, we are waiting for you," laughed the Mohawks.

A moment afterward a number of fire arrows fell within the stockade. These fire arrows were made by tying dry grass around the shaft of the arrow and igniting it before it was shot from the bow. Several arrows imbedded themselves in the roofs of lodges, but the boys climbed up and beat out the flames. As the Mohawks were prepared for the peril, their enemies soon abandoned the attempt to fire the camp.

"Our enemies see that we are too sharp for them," laughed the Mohawks.

In the meantime the war party had suddenly become silent, and the taunts from the Mohawk camp went unanswered. The Mohawks became suspicious. They believed that Ho-sa-ha-ho and his war leaders were planning some wily stratagem.

"Perhaps they are waiting for the fires to die down," said Kichkinet.

"It's likely," replied Holcombe.

They had joined the warriors who kept guard at the gate. Jim had left them, to make a tour of inspection about the camp with Ha-yo-went-ha and Short Dog. It was not long before he returned and said that everything was in readiness for further attacks.

"There'll be no more before daylight," prophesied Holcombe.

The brush piles had burned low and the bright glow was fading from the camp. Dawn was close at hand. The Mohawks watched eagerly for the light in the eastern sky.

"Achawi, I believe our enemies are getting ready to do something big," declared Kichkinet.

"Perhaps," replied Jim.

There was no sound from the Shawnees and their allies, but the Mohawks felt confident that they were keeping grim, silent vigil at the edge of the woods.

"At daylight they will come," said Short Dog.

As a pale gray streak showed in the east, the prophecy was fulfilled. A warning shout came from the north side of the camp, and a moment afterward the war cry rang through the forest. The attack appeared to be concentrated on the other side of the village, and, as the enemy appeared to be in force, Jim mustered a company of warriors and led them to the place of attack.

"Watch out for a trick," cautioned Holcombe. "Thar's too much noise and hullabaloo about this attack—I believe it's a trick, Jim."

"What do you mean?" Jim asked, anxiously.

"I believe they're tryin' to draw us away from the front of the camp," said Dan.

"Dan, I believe you are right," cried Jim.

At that moment they heard the war cry at the front of the camp. They looked at each other in alarm as the truth flashed through their minds. The war party had separated to attack the camp at different points.

"The Shawnees are pounding on the gate—we cannot drive them off," Ha-yo-went-ha told them.

"Dan, rush over there and take command," shouted Jim. "I'll go to the other end of the camp and bring some warriors to help you."

When Jim and Ha-yo-went-ha reached the north side of the camp they found that the attacking force was composed entirely of Ojibwas. They were fighting desperately, and many of them had climbed to the top of the stockade. Jim saw at once that it would be perilous to weaken his force at that point. Leaving Ha-yo-went-ha in command, Jim ran to join Holcombe at the front of the camp.

"Jim, lad, it looks like they're about to break in," Holcombe said, soberly.

The Shawnees were making desperate efforts to batter down the gate of the stockade. They had carried forward several great logs which they used as battering rams, and it appeared to be only a matter of moments before the gate would give way and admit them into the camp. The force of Mohawks along the stockade had been weakened to reinforce their tribesmen at the other end of the camp, and although they fought valiantly the Shawnees refused to yield ground. Holcombe had climbed upon the platform, and was shooting his rifle with telling effect. Jim, too, had taken his place on the firing line beside Kichkinet. Many of the Shawnees were armed with rifles, and the bullets whined ominously over the top of the stockade. A number of Mohawks had been killed and

wounded, and Jim realized that the situation was serious.

"Dan, we must drive them from the gate," he said.

"I'm doin' my best to thin 'em out," Holcombe replied, grimly.

The Shawnees held their ground with great stubbornness, and it soon became evident that they would demolish the gate which protected the camp. Alert to the peril, Jim jumped from the platform and rallied a strong force of warriors at the entrance to the village.

"My brothers, our enemies are about to break in," he cried. "We must drive them out. Your women and children are back there in those lodges. Mohawks, you must fight like men. Your brothers are holding off the Ojibwas at the other end of the camp. You must drive back the Shawnees. You all know how we overcame them at the great lake. Now we must overcome them again."

"Achawi, we are ready," declared the Mohawks.

"Watch out thar!" warned Holcombe.

As he called the great log gate was battered loose from its supports. Yelling triumphantly, the Shawnees rushed recklessly into the breach. They were met by a volley of arrows that

stopped them and threw them into disorder. Before they could rally, Jim led the Mohawks in a determined attack that drove the Shawnees from the stockade.

"See, we have come out to meet you—why do you run away?" the Mohawks called, mockingly.

Their success was short lived, for the Ojibwas had suddenly ceased their attack and circled about the camp to join their allies in the attempt to fight their way into the village. Encouraged by the arrival of the Ojibwas, the Shawnees raised the war cry and again rushed upon the stockade. The Ojibwas joined in the attack, and the Mohawks withdrew into the village and carried with them the logs which the Shawnees had used to break in the gate. The gate was raised in position and braced with the logs. In the meantime Ha-yo-went-ha had brought a company of warriors from the other end of the camp. Many of them climbed to the platform inside the stockade, and opened a savage attack upon their foes. Fighting from cover, they had a great advantage and it was not long before the Shawnees and Ojibwas were driven back.

Having been three times repulsed with heavy loss, the Shawnees appeared to have lost heart. They withdrew beyond bowshot, and shouted

threats and insults at their foes, but showed no inclination to continue the attack. The Mohawks seized the opportunity to strengthen the barricade at the entrance to the camp.

"It is good," Kichkinet cried, jubilantly. "We have beaten off our enemies. Now the light has come, and they are afraid to come back."

"Don't be too sure, Mohawk," Holcombe told him. "I believe the Shawnees have had about enough, but the Ojibwas are still full of fight. They'll be anxious to show off before the Shawnees, an' I figure they'll take the lead in one more try."

Jim nodded.

However, as the Mohawks had cut down the forest for a considerable distance about their camp, daylight made it impossible for their enemies to approach the stockade without being seen. For that reason the Mohawks felt confident. They believed that the Ojibwas, as well as the Shawnees, might be unwilling to expose themselves on open ground in daylight.

"They will hide in the woods until night comes again," the Mohawks told one another.

"Mebbe so," Holcombe told Jim. "However, I'm suspicious of the Ojibwas. They're proud

and boastful, an' I believe they'll make a big play before the Shawnees."

"The odds are now in our favor," said Jim. "Our enemies must realize that."

"For sartin," agreed Dan. "However, when two war parties join for a fight each of 'em will take big chances just to prove that he's the bravest buck. The Ojibwas have come here to help the Shawnees, an' they're eager to show what they can do. Anyway, that's how I figure it."

"Even so, Dan, perhaps they will wait for darkness rather than risk heavy loss by attacking in daylight," said Jim. "We are strongly intrenched, and what they failed to do under cover of the night they will be unlikely to accomplish now."

"Jim, as I figure it, everything depends on how much boastin' the Ojibwas have done," replied Dan.

CHAPTER VIII

OFF TO WARN THE FORT

THE Mohawks kept anxious vigil until long after sunrise, but their enemies failed to renew the attack. They had withdrawn into the forest, and threats and taunts from the camp failed to rouse them. The Mohawks wondered if Ho-sa-ha-ho and his great war party had actually abandoned the siege and departed from the vicinity. They had grave doubts.

"No, my friends, I do not believe they have gone away," declared Ha-yo-went-ha. "I believe they are hiding in the woods to fool us. Perhaps they are waiting to see if we send out scouts. Then they will try to catch them. My brothers, this is how I feel about it."

"Mohawks, Ha-yo-went-ha has given you good words," said Da-yo-ho-go. "I gave you the words of O-da-wa-an-do, the great Medicine Otter. We must do as he tells us to do. We must stay in the village and keep watching. If our young men go outside, I believe they will be killed."

However, as the day wore on and they neither saw nor heard anything of their foes, some of the younger Mohawks became impatient. They were eager to learn what had become of the war party. Many offered to go out and reconnoiter through the woods. Ha-yo-went-ha forbade them to leave the camp.

"Young men, you are brave enough, but you are also foolish," the chief said, sternly. "I believe that our enemies are watching sharp. If you try to reach the woods they will see you. I believe what Da-yo-ho-go says is true. If you go into the woods, I believe you will be killed. If our enemies do not come when it grows dark, then perhaps you can go and find out what we wish to know. Achawi, tell us how you feel about it."

"My brothers, I believe it would be foolish for these young men to leave the camp," said Jim. "Our enemies are sharp. We must watch out."

The advice was accepted, and the young warriors remained in the camp. Then, as there appeared to be little chance of an attack, the Mohawks relaxed their vigilance. Most of the warriors left the stockade, and visited the lodges to which the dead and wounded had been carried. Nine warriors had been killed, and criers

went about the village calling out the names of those who had died in defense of the camp. As each name was called the women and old men uttered doleful wails that filled the camp with gloom. The relatives and friends of the slain warriors pledged themselves to retaliate upon their foes at the first opportunity.

In the meantime Jim had summoned a company of warriors and set them at work to strengthen the gate at the entrance to the camp. When the task was completed, Jim and Holcombe went to their lodge to rest until nightfall.

"Dan, I am becoming a bit suspicious," said Jim.

"How so, Jim?" inquired Holcombe.

"The inactivity and silence of our enemies have set me thinking," Jim told him. "As you say, I believe the Shawnees have had enough fighting. Even the Ojibwas have discovered that the capture of the Mohawk camp is a far more difficult and perilous undertaking than Trouville had made them believe. I feel quite sure that the Ojibwas, as well as the Shawnees, suffered heavy loss in their last attack. As you well know, a war party soon loses heart when the fight goes against it. I feel certain that Trouville was the leader of the combined war

party. He has failed to make good his boast. His allies have suffered heavy loss. He will receive the blame for the ill fortune that has befallen his expedition. Dan, under those circumstances I believe that Trouville will have little chance of persuading his warriors to renew the fight."

"That satisfies us," laughed Holcombe.

"I am not so certain that it does," replied Jim. "Trouville will be anxious to regain his prestige as a leader, and overcome the dissatisfaction of his warriors. Unable to defeat the Mohawks, he may lead the war party in a revengeful raid upon the settlements. It is this possibility which disturbs me."

Holcombe nodded.

"Jim, I hadn't figured it out," he said. "Now I see it. It may be as you say. However, we can't do much guessin' before night. Then, if the Shawnees an' their friends fail to show up, it'll be purty nigh time to begin worryin'. We'll send out scouts to find out if the war party has gone. If it has gone, then we must find out which way the trail leads. If it turns toward the Shawnee camp, we can rest easy. If it leads toward the settlements or the fort we've got to do some movin'."

The day passed without alarm, and shortly

after sunset the evening fires were lighted and the Mohawks made preparations for the long, perilous hours of darkness. The last of the supply of dry sticks and brush was piled in the center of the camp, to be lighted in an emergency, the boys went to their posts and the warriors mounted the platform along the stockade. A company of famous fighters kept guard at the gate. Having made certain that all was in readiness, Jim joined Holcombe and Kichkinet at the front of the camp.

"Achawi, do you believe our enemies will come?" inquired Kichkinet.

"If they have waited in the woods, I believe they will come," replied Jim.

The crackle of the fires and the occasional snarls of the dogs were the only sounds in the Mohawk camp. The warriors kept silent watch at the stockade. The clouds had passed and the heavens were studded with stars. The feeble light made it possible to distinguish objects within a short bowshot of the camp. A young warrior at the north side of the stockade suddenly called a warning, but a moment later discovered that he had mistaken a prostrate log for the form of a foe.

"Dan, if our enemies plan to resume the fight, I can see no advantage for them in delay,"

said Jim. "They cannot hope to find the Mohawks unprepared. I believe they have left the field."

"It begins to look that way," agreed Holcombe.

When the night was two-thirds gone, the Mohawks decided to send out scouts to reconnoiter cautiously in the vicinity of the camp. Most of the younger warriors desired to enlist for the perilous service, but Ha-yo-went-ha chose only men of ripe experience. Black Cloud and Stands Alone and Little Bear were chosen.

"My brothers, I have asked you to do this thing because I know that you are sharp enough to go through with it," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "If our enemies are out there in the woods you will be in great danger. I believe you know what to do. I hope you will live to return to the village."

"Great Chief, we will try to find our enemies," replied Black Cloud. "If our enemies catch us, we will try to call out and warn you. Do not come to help us. Keep the gate closed. If you hear the bark of the little gray fox you will know that our enemies have gone. Then you can open the gate for us."

"It is good," said Ha-yo-went-ha.

A few moments later the gate was opened

sufficiently for them to pass through, and the scouts left the camp. They hurried away in the direction of the river, and within half a bowshot they vanished into the night.

"Our brothers are sharp," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "I believe they propose to separate at the river. One will stay by the water to watch at the front of the camp. His brothers will move through the woods on both sides of the camp. They will circle around and come together at the back of the camp. If they do not find our enemies, they will go back to their brother. Then they will come here to tell us about it."

Alert to the peril which threatened their scouts, the Mohawks kept anxious watch at the stockade. Dawn was close at hand when they finally heard the call of the little gray fox at the front of the camp. When the signal had been repeated three times, the gate was opened cautiously and Short Dog called out.

"Who is there?" he asked.

Black Cloud replied. A moment afterward the scouts entered the stockade.

"Brothers, we cannot find our enemies, and we believe they have gone away," said Black Cloud.

The Mohawks greeted the announcement with

whoops of delight. Jim and Holcombe exchanged anxious glances.

"Black Cloud, are you sure about this?" inquired Jim.

"Yes, my brother," replied Black Cloud. "I stayed at the river to watch the front of the camp. Stands Alone went through the woods on one side, and Little Bear went through the woods on the other side. They will tell you about it."

"My brothers, what Black Cloud says is true," declared Stands Alone. "Little Bear went through the woods on one side of the camp, and I went through the woods on the other side. We circled far back through the woods, and looked sharp. We stopped many times to listen. There was no one there. My brothers, we believe that our enemies have now run away."

"Which way did they go?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"Achawi, we cannot tell that until the light comes," replied Stands Alone.

"Light the fires!" shouted an excitable young warrior.

"Yes, yes, light the fires," cried others. "We will dance the Wa-sa-seh and sing the war songs for Great Areskoui and O-da-wa-an-do.

They have helped us to drive away our enemies."

"Tell your young men to wait," Jim cautioned Ha-yo-went-ha. "We are not sure that our enemies have gone. Perhaps they are still hiding somewhere in the woods where our scouts could not find them. We must be sure that they have gone before we burn up our wood."

"Achawi, your words are good," agreed Ha-yo-went-ha.

He called out and cautioned the young warriors against lighting the brush piles. Then he repeated the words of Achawi. They were instantly approved by the older men, but the young men appeared impatient. They assembled about a small fire in the center of the camp, and sang and danced in celebration of their success against their foes.

In the meantime, as there appeared little probability of an attack, Jim and Holcombe went to their lodge to talk. Uncertainty as to the whereabouts and intentions of Ho-sa-ha-ho and his war party kept them in suspense.

"Dan, when there is sufficient light, we must follow the trail," Jim said, uneasily.

"Correct," agreed Dan.

When the soft gray light of dawn finally drove the night shadows from the woods, Jim and Holcombe prepared to set out upon the trail of their foes. When the Mohawks learned of their intentions they tried to dissuade them from their purpose.

"My brothers, we have driven off our enemies and now there is no more danger," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "Why do you propose to leave our village and risk your lives to follow our enemies? I believe it would be foolish, for I do not see what good can come of it."

"Great Chief, I will tell you why we propose to follow our enemies," said Jim. "We believe that the Shawnees and the Ojibwas are very mad. Ho-sa-ha-ho told those warriors that it would be easy to break into your village. He told them that many of your warriors were away. He told them that you did not know anything about what he proposed to do. Now the Shawnees and the Ojibwas have found out that the words of Ho-sa-ha-ho were bad. We believe the Shawnees and the Ojibwas have turned against Ho-sa-ha-ho. We believe Ho-sa-ha-ho will try to do something big to please them. Yes, my brothers, we believe that Ho-sa-ha-ho may lead the great war party against our people. We will follow Ho-sa-ha-ho. If he turns

toward our people, we must run ahead and warn them."

For some moments the Mohawks considered Jim's words in silence. Then they began to talk soberly among themselves. At last Ha-yo-went-ha replied.

"Achawi, we see that your words are good," he said. "We would like to have you stay here in our village, but we see that it is best for you to do as you propose. Many of our young men wish to go with you."

"Kichkinet will go with us," replied Jim. "If we find that our people are in danger, Kichkinet will come here and tell you about it. Then, my brothers, you must go to help us."

"When Achawi calls, we will go," declared the Mohawks.

The scouts were impatient to be on their way, but old Da-yo-ho-go asked them to wait and hear his words.

"Mohawks, our brothers are about to leave our camp," said Da-yo-ho-go. "Before they go I wish to give them some words. Now, my brothers, listen sharp to what I am about to say. When Achawi first came to our village, I did not like it. At that time I believed that the French were our friends. I listened to the

words of Tor-yoh-ne and Ho-sa-ha-ho. They talked bad against Achawi and his people. At that time I believed that those people killed my brother. My heart was bad against the Great White Chief and his people. Tor-yoh-ne told me those people proposed to drive us from our villages and take our hunting grounds. Tor-yoh-ne told me that Achawi came here to talk against him, and fool us with big words so that it would be easy for his people to overcome us.

"Now, my brothers, I know that those words were not true. I see that Achawi and his people are our friends. Achawi has done big things to help us. Mohawks, my heart is good toward Achawi and his people."

"Da-yo-ho-go, your words warm my heart," Jim told him. "I am glad to know that you are my friend. Tor-yoh-ne and Ho-sa-ha-ho tried to fool you. Now you know about it. It is good. I will tell the Great White Chief and his people that Da-yo-ho-go is their friend. They will feel good about it. They will say, 'Da-yo-ho-go is a great Medicine Person; he will help us.' "

"Yes, yes, Da-yo-ho-go will help his friends and destroy his enemies," Da-yo-ho-go cried, boastfully. "I have mysterious power. You

all know that Tor-yoh-ne is dead. Pretty soon something bad will happen to Ho-sa-ha-ho. They have turned against Da-yo-ho-go, and Da-yo-ho-go will destroy them."

When the Medicine Man ceased speaking the scouts left the village. Many warriors accompanied them into the woods at the easterly side of the camp. They found many tracks, but it was long after sunrise when Kichkinet finally discovered the trail of the war party. It led toward the north. They followed it until midday, and then discovered that it turned sharply toward the east.

"It is bad," declared Kichkinet.

"Dan, I fear they are bound for the fort or the settlements," Jim said, anxiously.

"We must make sure that it's not a trick," Holcombe told him. "Mebbe they've separated. Come, Mohawks, look around and see if you can pick up another trail."

The Mohawks circled through the woods, while Holcombe examined the ground for evidence which might prove that the war party had separated. He found nothing to confirm his suspicions. The Mohawks were equally unsuccessful.

"There are no other tracks," they said. "Our enemies are keeping together."

They followed the trail until sunset, and then Jim asked the Mohawks to return to the camp. Jim and his companions continued along the trail.

"I believe Trouville plans to attack our people, and we must travel fast to warn them," Jim told Holcombe.

"Jim, thar's just one chance to beat 'em," replied Holcombe. "If Trouville plans to surprise our people, he'll keep well away from the Mohawk trail to avoid meetin' up with scouts from the fort. His war party is a big one, and they'll make slow travelin' through the woods. We'll let 'em go their way, an' strike back for the Mohawk trail to the lake. It'll give us direct an' easy goin', an' by shakin' our legs until well into the night we'd ought to make the fort in three days. I figure it'll take five days for Trouville to lead his war party to the lake. The warriors are tired an' ugly, an' they'll want to stop an' do a lot o' talkin' about how brave they were in the fight with the Mohawks. We'd ought to beat Trouville to the lake by two days. That'll give the people at the fort time to send warnin' to the settlements."

"Dan, your plan is excellent, and we will fol-

low it," said Jim. "However, we must watch out for the Ojibwa scouts along the trail."

"Jim, if we meet up with 'em this time, it'll be their turn to watch out," Holcombe replied, significantly.

CHAPTER IX

WAITING FOR TROUVILLE TO STRIKE

SHORTLY after sunset on the third day of their journey from the Mohawk camp, the scouts climbed wearily to the top of the high hill which afforded a view of the lake and fort.

"Thar she is," Holcombe cried, gayly.

They seated themselves on the bare rocky summit of the hill, and for some moments gazed silently upon the darkening waters of the great wilderness lake that had become the storm center in the conflict between the French and the English. Smoke was rising from the fort, and they saw people moving about inside of the stockade.

"Dan, everything looks natural, and I believe we are in time to give warning to the settlements," Jim said, hopefully.

At that moment they heard the faint, far away notes of a bugle.

"Thar goes mess call, an' we're due to be late," laughed Holcombe.

They rose and followed the trail toward the lake. For three days and the better part of two

nights they had raced along the trail in the hope of reaching the fort ahead of Trouville and his war party, and they were beginning to feel the effects of their exhausting effort.

"Keep a movin'—we'll soon be thar," Holcombe called, cheerily.

The short autumn twilight had faded and darkness was fast closing down as they finally approached the fort. They were recognized by the sentinels, and a moment afterward scouts, soldiers and rangers came to meet them. They stopped at the gate while Jim talked with the young lieutenant whom he had left in command of the rangers.

"Jackson, have you seen anything of our enemies?" Jim asked, anxiously.

"Only a few scouts prowlin' through the woods," replied Jackson.

"Good," Jim said, heartily. "Tell Colonel Bagley that I have important information for him."

Jackson saluted.

"By the way, Captain, I have some news for *you*," he said. "I have to report that Colonel Johnson is here. He arrived with an escort last night, and is at headquarters with Colonel Bagley."

"I am delighted to hear it," replied Jim.

"Inform Colonel Johnson of my arrival, and present my respects."

The ranger saluted, and turned away.

"My friends, I have great news for you," Jim told Holcombe and Kichkinet. "Colonel Johnson is here."

"Couldn't be better, Jim," said Holcombe.

"It is good," declared Kichkinet. "Now we will tell the Great White Chief how my people drove away their enemies."

Jim cautioned his companions against telling of their adventures before he had an opportunity to report to the commanding officer at the fort. The three scouts went to Jim's quarters, and awaited instructions. It was not long before the ranger came for Jim.

"Captain, the Colonel desires to see you," he said.

Jim hastened to headquarters and found Colonel Bagley and Colonel Johnson awaiting him.

"Captain Mason, I am delighted to see you," Colonel Johnson said, cordially, as he rose and offered his hand.

"Thank you, sir, it is good to see you here," replied Jim. "In fact, your arrival at this time is most fortunate, as I have news of considerable importance."

Jim turned to Colonel Bagley.

"Colonel Bagley, shall I report?" he asked.

"Report, Captain," replied the officer.

"Gentlemen, I have to report that Jacques Trouville has attacked the Mohawk camp with a great war party of Shawnees and Ojibwas," said Jim. "He was driven off with considerable loss, and has turned this way with his war party. We fear that he has planned an attack against either the fort or the settlements, and we have hastened here to give warning of his approach. There is little time, as Trouville and his war party left the Mohawk camp four days ago."

"Well, well, this rogue Trouville *is* growing bold," said Colonel Bagley.

Colonel Johnson nodded.

"Our first concern is to get warning to the settlements," declared Colonel Bagley. "We must send couriers at once. Captain Mason, send your rangers. The settlements to the westward are most exposed, but we must warn all, including those along the Mohawk as far as Fort Johnson. If Trouville has become so bold, we cannot tell where he may strike. Colonel Johnson, do you approve?"

"I do," Colonel Johnson replied, heartily.

"Captain Mason, send your men at once, and

then return and give us further details," said Colonel Bagley.

"Very good, sir," replied Jim.

He left the officers, and instructed Jackson to assemble the rangers. Then Jim selected six of the most experienced woodsmen and sent them to warn the settlements. After the men had gone, Jim returned to headquarters.

"The men have gone, sir," Jim told Colonel Bagley. "I cautioned those who have gone to the western settlements to keep sharp watch for Trouville and his warriors. I also instructed them to advise us at once if there is certainty of an attack."

"Good," said Colonel Bagley.

Jim then gave a complete description of the fight at the Mohawk camp. The officers listened attentively, and it was apparent that Trouville's bold and unexpected attack caused them considerable anxiety. They remained silent for some moments after Jim had finished his report. Colonel Johnson was first to speak.

"It seems unlikely that Trouville will attempt an attack upon the fort, and yet it would be foolish to feel too confident," he said. "We must take proper precautions. However, my real concern is for the western settlements. I

sincerely hope that our scouts will be in time to warn them.''

''Those settlers have grown extremely cautious, and it is probable that they are keeping a sharp watch for such an emergency,'' Colonel Bagley replied, hopefully. ''In the meantime I shall take the necessary precautions here at the fort.''

He called an orderly who was on duty outside the door.

''Ask Captain Bradford to come here,'' he said.

In a few moments the officer who commanded the militia at the fort arrived in response to the summons.

''Captain Bradford, we have learned that Trouville and a large war party of Shawnees and Ojibwas have made a daring, but unsuccessful, attack upon the Mohawk camp,'' Colonel Bagley told him. ''Four days ago Trouville and his war party set out in this direction. Captain Mason fears that Trouville may plan to attack either the fort or the settlements. It seems quite probable. We have already sent scouts to carry a warning to the settlements. I also wish to take necessary precautions here at the fort. Captain Bradford, I desire you to make certain that all is in readiness for an at-

tack. Post sentinels outside of the stockade, and double the guard at night until you receive further orders. The rangers will reconnoiter in the woods, so that there will be little danger of Trouville's approaching without our knowledge. However, keep your men off the lake, and post a strong guard to prevent the seizure or destruction of the canoes and bateaux. Captain Bradford, these are your instructions; please put them into effect at once."

"I shall do so, sir," replied Captain Bradford.

The militiaman immediately withdrew, and soon afterward Jim also took leave of his superior officers, and went to his quarters. He found Holcombe and Kichkinet sleeping soundly. Both awakened, a moment after he had entered the room.

"Friends, come with me; I have found food," Jim told them.

"Lead us," cried Holcombe.

They joined a detail of scouts who had just returned from the woods and were being served with late mess at one of the fires. In reply to Jim's questions they said they had seen nothing to indicate that either the French or their Indians were anywhere in the vicinity of the fort. They appeared curious to learn what had

aroused his suspicions, and, having reported to Colonel Bagley, Jim told his story to the crowd of men who immediately assembled about the fire to hear the details of the fight at the Mohawk camp. They listened with breathless interest until the account was finished, and then they began to discuss the possibilities.

"As I figure it, Trouville is more likely to attack the settlements," declared Jack Crawford, a noted scout from Fort Johnson.

"Yes; he'll find easier pickin' there than at the fort," prophesied a militiaman.

"You can't tell; these French war parties are likely to strike whar you least expect 'em," replied a ranger. "How about it, Dan?"

"I've no idee," said Holcombe.

News of Trouville and his war party brought a thrill into the monotonous lives of the men at the fort, and they continued talking until far into the night. However, long before the discussions were ended the three tired scouts left them and returned to Jim's quarters.

On the following day the rangers left the fort at dawn and went far up the lake to seek evidence of the war party. When they returned at night they reported that they had seen nothing of their foes.

"Dan, do you believe Trouville has gone to the settlements?" Jim asked, fearfully.

"It looks a bit suspicious," Holcombe told him. "He's had plenty o' time to get here, an' he's failed to show up. He's turned off *somewhar,* that's plumb sartin. However, if he's gone to the settlements, we'll soon hear about it. Anyway, I'm hopin' our scouts got thar first."

They spent the day in considerable suspense, waiting for word of Trouville and his war party. They knew that several days must pass before they could learn the fate of the settlements, but if Trouville and his warriors were approaching the fort, it seemed probable that the scouts would learn of it before night. However, when the night finally passed, and the war party failed to appear, Jim was perplexed.

"Dan, what do you make of it?" he asked Holcombe.

The scout shook his head.

"Mohawk, how do you feel about it?" inquired Jim.

"Achawi, six suns have passed since the war party left our village," replied Kichkinet. "Your scouts have watched sharp, but they cannot find our enemies. I do not believe they are coming here."

For a moment or so Jim considered the possibility in silence. Then he again turned eagerly to Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, do you believe Ho-sa-ha-ho and his warriors have gone to the settlements?" he asked.

"It looks bad," said Kichkinet.

At sunset two of the scouts returned and reported that the settlements nearest to the fort had been warned and were prepared for an attack. However, as there had been little fear of an attack upon those settlements, the report failed to relieve the suspense of the men at the fort. As Trouville had failed to appear, they feared that he had turned aside to attack the western frontier. It was the sole topic of conversation, as the men assembled in little groups to discuss the possibility. All waited eagerly for the return of the scouts who had gone to warn the isolated communities to the westward.

"Even with the best o' luck, it'll be another day before they can get here," declared a ranger.

"If Trouville and his gang are holdin' tight about the settlements, it'll be no easy job to get here at all," prophesied a militiaman.

"I wish they'd seen fit to 'tack the fort," declared a younger soldier.

"Aye, lad, we all wish it," laughed a scout.

"They might a larned somethin'" replied Holcombe.

"I'll warrant it," agreed a soldier.

The next day the scouts again moved far up the lake, and upon their return reported that they had discovered several fresh moccasin tracks, but had been unable to follow the trail. The news caused great excitement at the fort. The fact that hostile scouts were reconnoitering within half a day's journey of the fort revived the possibility of an attack.

"Mebbe Trouville *is* bold enough to fight us, after all," said a militiaman.

"Not unless he's been reinforced from the north," replied a ranger.

"That's an idee," said Crawford, the scout. "Mebbe Trouville an' his gang *have* joined up with another war party from Ticonderoga."

The possibility renewed the discussion, and it was late when the talk finally ceased. Jim and Holcombe took little part in the council. However, when they returned to Jim's quarters they began to talk.

"Dan, do you believe Trouville *is* coming to the fort?" inquired Jim.

"Thar's no proof—yet," Holcombe told him. "One or two fresh moccasin tracks mean little

at this time. It's likely the French are watchin' us, same as we're watchin' 'em. They send their Injuns down here to snoop around through the woods, an' make sure that we're not movin' up the lake to attack Ticonderoga. However, Jim, it might be that those tracks were made by Trouville's scouts, but I doubt it. His only chance agin' the fort would be to strike quick an' spring a surprise. He's held back too long to do that now. Jim, I'm more worried about the western settlements.''

Jim nodded.

Late the following day their fears were confirmed, when the scouts returned to the fort and reported that Pine Gap, an isolated settlement along the western frontier, had been attacked by Trouville and his war party. Fortunately, however, the scouts had arrived before the attack, and the settlers had an opportunity to withdraw into the block house, or log fort, which was the usual rendezvous in times of peril. Finding the settlers prepared to resist them, the Shawnees and Ojibwas became cautious, and confined their efforts to burning two cabins at the edge of the woods, and a grist mill a short distance from the fort.

Then the war party withdrew toward the north. The settlers escaped without loss, but a

number of Indians were killed by the rifle fire from the fort.

"Well, Jim, our warnin' did some good after all," laughed Holcombe.

"Dan, I am overjoyed at the escape of our people," replied Jim. "Trouville has again led the Shawnees into a losing fight, and I believe it will greatly weaken his influence with the tribe."

While they were talking a militiaman approached and reported that Colonel Johnson desired to see Jim at once.

"Jim, when the Colonel calls, it usually means business, an' I'm figurin' we'll soon be on the move agin," said Holcombe.

When Jim arrived at headquarters, he found the officers at the fort assembled for a conference. Colonel Johnson presided.

"Captain Mason, I desire to commend you and your fellow scouts for your timely warning which alone averted a massacre at Pine Gap," Colonel Johnson told Jim.

Jim saluted.

"We are gratified at the failure of the attack, but we are also greatly incensed at this latest outrage upon our people," continued Colonel Johnson. "We have little patience with this barbarous method of warfare, but we

realize that it will continue while Trouville and Stockley are able to elude us. Therefore, we are determined to put an end to the activities of those rogues without further delay. As you know, Captain Mason, we have good reason for believing that Trouville and his band have established a secret rendezvous somewhere in the northern wilderness. We must learn where it is. Then, I believe, we shall be able to surprise and capture them.

"Captain Mason, you have already been commissioned to devote your efforts to Trouville and his outlaws. You have made an excellent start by thwarting him both at the Mohawk camp and at Pine Gap. We feel confident that your further efforts will eventually eliminate him as a menace to our frontiers. With that happy result in mind, sir, I now request you to strike the trail of Trouville and his war party and follow him to his hiding place. If you are successful in finding it, I feel certain that you will make the most of your opportunity. I shall give no instructions or recommendations as to how you shall proceed in this matter. Captain Mason, we desire the elimination of Trouville and his confederates, and the manner of accomplishing that task will be left to your own good judgment. If you require troops they

will be sent to aid you. In the meantime we shall await with entire confidence the result of your undertaking."

"Colonel Johnson, I shall do my best," Jim said, quietly.

"I feel certain it will be sufficient," replied Colonel Johnson.

Jim soon took leave of the officers and hastened to his quarters. Holcombe looked up inquiringly as Jim entered the room, but Kichkinet concealed his curiosity.

"My friends, at dawn we will set out upon the trail of Trouville, and his war party," Jim told them.

"I figured it," chuckled Holcombe.

Kichkinet kept silent, but there was a momentary flash in his eyes that betrayed his emotion.

CHAPTER X

THE SEARCH BEGINS

SHORTLY after dawn Jim awakened the quartermaster, and procured the necessary supplies for the journey into the northern wilderness. He also obtained a buckskin shirt for Kichkinet.

"My brother, here is a shirt to keep you warm," he said.

"It is good," replied Kichkinet.

A few moments later they left the fort and set out on their search for Trouville and the war party. Having learned that Trouville had gone toward the north, they believed that by traveling directly toward the west they would eventually cross his trail. They circled the southern end of the lake, and again climbed the high hill. Then they stopped for a moment to look back at the fort. The balmy October days had passed, and the woods were becoming brown and bleak. A cold wind blew from the north, and the lake was dotted with white caps. A flock of geese passed noisily overhead.

"Thar's a sign of cold weather," prophesied Holcombe.

Kichkinet nodded.

They turned down the hillside and followed the Mohawk trail toward the west. At the end of the day they stopped at the little spring where they had passed the first night on their previous journey to the Mohawk camp. It was the place where they had heard the mysterious prowler circling about their camp, and they determined to take proper precautions. However, as they had seen nothing more of the Ojibwa scouts they felt somewhat reassured. They were provided with several days' rations of jerked venison and camp biscuits, and it was unnecessary to make a fire.

"This time we'll keep things dark," proposed Holcombe.

"It will be safer," agreed Jim.

Kichkinet left them and reconnoitered about the camp. When he returned he said that he had found no indications of enemies.

"That's good so fur as it goes," chuckled Holcombe. "However, even a Mohawk can't find tracks until they're made. Everything looked safe last time, but some one came snoopin' around here later an' upsot all our calculations."

"Dan, I believe it will be wise to move away from the trail before we settle down for the night," said Jim. "This spring is a well known camp site, and if enemies are in the vicinity, they may come here to look for us."

"That's good figurin'," replied Dan. "I was about to propose it, myself."

"My brothers, it would be foolish to stay here," declared Kichkinet.

They left the spring and moved farther back into the woods until they found an open spot in a little grove of spruces. It was well concealed and offered shelter from the wind, and they decided to make it their camp site for the night. Jim proposed that he and Kichkinet would keep the night watch, but Holcombe instantly objected.

"Jim, if I'm growin' too old for such work, then I'd best go back to the settlements to sit with the old women at the fires," Dan said, irritably.

"Dan, if you feel that way about it, I shall never make the proposal again," Jim told him.

"Good," replied Dan.

It was decided that Jim should keep the first watch, Kichkinet the middle watch, and Dan the last. The night was almost ended when Jim

and Kichkinet were suddenly awakened by Holcombe.

"Listen to 'em," he said.

They heard a weird medley of sounds far to the westward. Once thoroughly awake, they quickly recognized the noise in the distance.

"Wolves," said Jim.

"Correct," replied Holcombe. "Jim, they've set me wonderin'. Mebbe they're on the trail of Trouville an' his warriors."

"Do you believe they would attack at this season?" Jim asked, doubtfully.

"No, I don't mean that," said Dan. "What I'm thinkin' is that the Injuns may have killed deer or elk and left a carcass or two along the trail. Mebbe the wolves have found 'em."

"Dan, the possibility is worth investigating," replied Jim.

"So I figure," said Dan.

The sounds soon subsided, but the scouts remained awake until daylight. Soon afterward they left the camp site and continued along the Mohawk trail. They had carefully estimated the direction and distance of the sounds which they had heard during the night, and they believed that the wolf pack had been at least a half day's journey toward the northwest.

"We'd best follow along the trail a ways, an' then strike north," proposed Holcombe.

They moved cautiously along the trail until midday, and then they turned toward the north. Soon afterward they decided to separate so that they might cover a wider area in their search for the trail of the war party. Jim continued toward the north, while Dan moved farther toward the west, and Kichkinet turned toward the east. They agreed to meet at a small woodland pond at sunset.

"It ought to be plumb ahead of you, Jim, if you keep straight into the north," Holcombe told Jim.

"I'll find it, Dan," Jim said, confidently.

He traveled steadily toward the north until the end of the day, and then, having found no evidence of his foes, he climbed to the summit of a low ridge to look for the little lake which Holcombe had designated as the meeting place. He saw it a short distance farther toward the north. As the sun had already disappeared behind a low bank of clouds, Jim left the hilltop and made his way toward the rendezvous. He circled cautiously about the lake to look for tracks, but found only the fresh trails of deer and elk. Convinced that the woods were free

of foes, he went to the edge of the water and seated himself in the bushes to watch. The sun had gone down, and Jim believed that his friends would soon join him. It was not long before he heard the notes of the white-throated sparrow, about a rifle shot farther along the shore. When the song ended abruptly, he recognized it as a signal from Kichkinet. Jim imitated the notes, and in a short time Kichkinet joined him.

"You are here—it is good," said Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, have you found signs of our enemies?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"No," replied Kichkinet. "I looked sharp, but I did not see anything."

"I saw nothing," Jim told him.

'Perhaps To-nes-sa-ah will find them."

Jim nodded.

The sunset glow had faded from the sky, and the twilight shadows were reaching out across the water. Darkness was close at hand. Jim felt somewhat anxious about Holcombe. He wondered what had delayed him.

"To-nes-sa-ah should be here," he said.

"Perhaps he has found our enemies," replied Kichkinet. "Pretty soon he will come."

However, as night finally closed down, and Holcombe failed to appear, Jim's anxiety in-

creased. Kichkinet, however, showed little concern.

"To-nes-sa-ah will come," he said.

Several times they were deceived by deer and elk which came to the shore of the lake to drink. Once they heard the moose call far away to the northward. However, there was no signal from Holcombe.

"Mohawk, the night is half gone, and To-nes-sa-ah has not come," Jim said, uneasily. "I am troubled about it."

"To-nes-sa-ah is a great scout," Kichkinet assured him. "Perhaps he is waiting to find out something."

Jim felt doubtful. He believed that Holcombe would have come to tell them if he had found the trail of the war party.

"Kichkinet, I believe something bad has happened to To-nes-sa-ah," Jim declared, at last.

The Mohawk failed to reply. Jim believed that Kichkinet was attempting to conceal his anxiety. For a long time they sat in silence, hoping each moment to hear the signal from their friend. They heard an owl hooting in the timber at the other end of the lake, but they decided that the call was genuine. They kept anxious watch until the night finally passed, and

dawn flushed the sky. Then Jim resolved to act.

"Mohawk, we must find out what has happened to To-nes-sa-ah," he said. "Come, we will go and look for his trail."

"Wait," counseled Kichkinet. "If we go away from here, perhaps To-nes-sa-ah will come. If he does not find us here he will not know what to make of it. Achawi, you must wait here for To-nes-sa-ah. I will go to look for him."

"It is good," said Jim.

Kichkinet left him and set out toward the west. Jim seated himself at the edge of the lake, and attempted to solve the mystery of Holcombe's disappearance. A number of startling possibilities came into his mind. At first he refused to consider them. He told himself that Holcombe was safe, and would soon arrive at the lake. However, as the day wore on Jim began to lose confidence. He waited impatiently for the return of Kichkinet. At last he heard the familiar signal.

"Come, my brother," he called.

As Kichkinet joined him it was evident that something was wrong. The serious face and troubled eyes of the Mohawk warned Jim that his fears were about to be confirmed.

"Achawi, it is bad," Kichkinet said, solemnly. "Our enemies have caught To-nes-sa-ah."

"I feared it," Jim said, sadly. "Mohawk, tell me about it."

"I went over there toward the-place-where-the-sun-sleeps," said Kichkinet. "Then I turned back toward the trail that leads to our village. Pretty soon I found some fresh tracks. I looked sharp. They were moccasin tracks. Our enemy Ho-sa-ha-ho does not wear moccasins. It would be easy to find his track. I looked for it. It was not there. I followed those tracks back a long ways. Then I found the place where the wolves had been feeding. I found the ashes of a fire at that place. I moved around that place a long time. Then I followed the tracks back this way. Pretty soon I found a fresh track. It was bigger than the other tracks. To-nes-sa-ah makes big tracks. I said, 'Here is the track of To-nes-sa-ah!' I kept watching that track. Pretty soon I came to a place where the bushes were all tramped down. I moved around that place many times and looked close. I said, 'There was a fight at this place. Perhaps those warriors caught To-nes-sa-ah.' Pretty soon I saw that it was true. See, my brother, this is how I came to know about it."

Kichkinet thrust his hand inside the bosom of his shirt, and produced a fragment of fringed buckskin which appeared to have been torn from a shirt. He passed it to Jim for inspection. Jim recognized it at once.

"Yes, my brother, this tells us what has happened to To-nes-sa-ah," he said.

For some moments he studied the fragment of buckskin in silence. The capture of Holcombe was a crushing blow, and Jim found it difficult to conceal his emotions. For the moment he appeared bewildered and dazed. He feared that if Holcombe had fallen into the hands of Trouville and the Shawnees there was little chance to save him. The thought suddenly roused him, as he realized that there was not a moment to spare. He turned excitedly to Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, our brother is in danger; we must save him," he said, resolutely.

"Achawi, I am ready," replied Kichkinet.

"We must strike the trail of Ho-sa-ha-ho and his war party and follow it until we come up with them," proposed Jim. "Come, Mohawk, lead me to that trail."

Kichkinet appeared perplexed. He shook his head.

"My brother, I do not believe that Ho-sa-

ha-ho and his warriors had anything to do with this thing," he said.

Jim stared at him in amazement. Having felt certain that Holcombe had fallen into the hands of Trouville and his war party, he was at a loss to understand the words of Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, if Ho-sa-ha-ho and his warriors had nothing to do with this thing, then who carried off To-nes-sa-ah?"

"Achawi, I believe the Lenapes or the Hurons carried away our brother," declared Kichkinet.

"Why do you believe that?" inquired Jim.

"The tracks told me about it," Kichkinet assured him. "The tracks told me that only a few warriors passed that way. Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother were not with them. Those warriors left fresh meat behind them. A war party would not do that. No; they would be afraid that their enemies would find out about it. Achawi, I do not believe the warriors who caught our brother were with the big war party. I believe they are hunters. I believe they are Lenapes or Hurons. They are going straight ahead toward O-ta-wa-ga, the Cold Place. If we travel fast, I believe we will soon come up with them. Then we will find out who they are, and what they propose to do with our brother."

"Come," Jim cried, eagerly.

CHAPTER XI

ANXIOUS HOURS

THE possibility that Holcombe had been captured by other foes than Trouville and the Shawnees revived Jim's drooping spirits. Although he feared that either the Delawares or Hurons might eventually condemn their captive to death, nevertheless Jim hoped that there might be sufficient delay to afford opportunity for a rescue.

"Mohawk, if what you say is true, perhaps we can save To-nes-sa-ah," he told Kichkinet.

The Mohawk nodded.

They hurried away toward the west, and shortly before sunset they arrived at the place where Kichkinet had left the trail earlier in the day. Soon afterward they found the remains of a small campfire, and they felt quite certain that Holcombe and his captors had passed the night at that spot.

"If we had only known about it," Jim said, regretfully.

They continued along the trail until darkness

finally compelled them to stop. Then they sat down to discuss the possibilities.

"Mohawk, if these warriors passed the night back there where we found the ashes of that fire, they cannot be very far ahead of us," said Jim.

"It is true," agreed Kichkinet.

"Then it would be foolish to wait here until daylight," declared Jim. "Perhaps we can find their camp. To-nes-sa-ah is in great danger. We must go."

"It is good," replied Kichkinet.

They rose, and moved away toward the north. For a long time they traveled in silence, watching eagerly for the glow from a fire. At frequent intervals Kichkinet stopped, and sniffed the air. Jim knew that the Mohawk was searching the wind for a trace of smoke. They were unable to find a clue, and when the night was half gone, they decided to stop.

"Achawi, we must turn around and go back," said Kichkinet. "Perhaps these warriors have turned off. If we keep going ahead, we will be far away from them when the light comes."

"It is true," replied Jim.

They turned about and returned to the place where they had left the trail. It was almost daylight when they found the landmark which

Kichkinet had kept in mind. As they had no reason to suspect that foes were anywhere near, they crawled beneath the drooping branches of a large spruce and soon fell asleep. At daylight Jim was awakened by Kichkinet.

"My brother, the light has come," he said.

They loitered long enough to eat a ration of dried venison, and then, after they had found a small spring close by, they again set out to follow the trail. It was not long before it turned, and led directly toward the east.

"They are going to Ticonderoga," said Jim.

A short distance farther on they found the spot where the unknown warriors had spent the night. Kichkinet closely examined the ground. When he had finished he held up six fingers.

"Six warriors?" Jim asked him.

Kichkinet nodded.

"How do you know that?"

"My eyes tell me," said Kichkinet.

He stooped and beckoned for Jim to approach. Then he traced an indistinct, almost imperceptible, depression in the leaves.

"I believe To-nes-sa-ah was lying in that place," he said. "See, a warrior was on this side of him, and another warrior was on that side."

As Kichkinet traced the indistinct forms with

his fingers, Jim was able to see them. Then Kichkinet moved a bow length away.

"Three warriors slept here," he said.

Kneeling and closely examining the ground, Jim again saw the evidence which the skillful Mohawk had been quick to discover.

"Here is where one warrior sat up to watch," explained Kichkinet.

A short distance away at the base of a tree a small cluster of plants had been flattened to earth, and a bow length in front of them the leaves had been stirred from their place. Kichkinet explained that the watcher had sat with his back against the tree, and that the restless moving of his feet as he raised and lowered his knees had displaced the leaves.

"Kichkinet, the Mohawks are great scouts," Jim said, admiringly.

Having learned the number of Holcombe's captors, Jim followed Kichkinet along the trail with fresh hopes. He believed that it would be necessary for the warriors to pass at least one more night on the trail, and he hoped to overtake them before they reached Ticonderoga.

"Mohawk, perhaps we will come up with them before the day passes," he said.

"We must travel fast," replied Kichkinet.

At midday, however, the Mohawk lost the

trail on a bare rocky track of ground upon which even his sharp eyes were unable to find a clue. He circled carefully about the spot but was unable to find a track. Then he went back until he again found the trail, and attempted to follow it, but again lost it on the dry, barren ground.

"It is bad," Kichkinet said, irritably. "Achawi, now I know why these warriors came up this way. This hard ground goes a long ways. They crossed it to hide their tracks. Perhaps before they leave it they will turn off some other way. If they do that, it will be hard to find them."

Jim was in despair as he realized that delay might cost the life of Holcombe.

"Mohawk, we *must* find them," he told Kichkinet.

Kichkinet kept silent. For some moments he continued to stare at the baffling tract of rock strewn ground which defied his skill. Jim waited impatiently for him to speak.

"Achawi, there is only one way to find out about this thing," he said, finally. "Perhaps these warriors have gone straight ahead—perhaps they have turned off some other way. We must be sure about it. I will go along one side of this bad place, and you must go along the

other side. We must circle far back until we get to the end of this rocky ground. If those warriors have turned off, we will find their trail. If we do not find it, we will know they have gone straight ahead. We will come together at the end of this rocky ground. Travel fast, and look sharp, my brother."

"It is good," replied Jim.

They separated, and Kichkinet began a wide detour toward the north, while Jim turned toward the south. Jim went a considerable distance before he finally reached the end of the barren ground, and then he turned eastward. He had entered a great forest of pines, and the ground was comparatively free of undergrowth and covered with a heavy layer of pine needles. Jim saw that it would be easy to find the tracks of his enemies if they had turned in that direction. For a long time he followed rapidly along a game trail. He saw countless tracks of deer and elk, and at a marshy spot he discovered the fresh footprints of a bear. Game of all sorts appeared to be abundant, but Jim had little interest. His thoughts were of Holcombe and the possibility of rescuing him from his perilous predicament. When the game trail turned sharply toward the south Jim left it, and continued toward the east. Then he suddenly heard

the sharp, startling report of a rifle. It had sounded far to the eastward.

"What has happened?" Jim asked himself, uneasily.

When he heard nothing more, he hastened directly toward the spot where he expected to meet Kichkinet. He found the Mohawk awaiting him.

"Mohawk, did you hear a shot?" Jim asked anxiously.

Kichkinet nodded.

"These warriors are foolish," he laughed. "They have told us where to find them."

"Do you believe they fired that shot?"

Kichkinet nodded.

"Come," he said.

He led the way into the timber and pointed toward several fresh moccasin tracks. One which appeared considerably larger than the others was in the center of a little patch of bare ground.

"To-nes-sa-ah is sharp," laughed Kichkinet. "He steps in the open places so that we can follow his tracks."

Kichkinet appeared greatly encouraged by the discovery of the trail. However, he showed little interest in the rifle shot, which caused Jim great uneasiness.

"Mohawk, I am troubled about that shot," Jim said, anxiously, as they hurried along. "Perhaps To-nes-sa-ah has made a fight."

Kichkinet shook his head.

"To-nes-sa-ah could not do that," he said. "These warriors took away his weapons and tied his hands."

"That is true," agreed Jim.

A still more alarming possibility suggested itself. Had the warriors suddenly found reason for putting their captive to death? Jim grew weak at the thought.

"Kichkinet, do you believe these warriors have killed To-nes-sa-ah?" Jim asked, fearfully.

"No, my brother," replied Kichkinet.

"Then what do you make of that rifle shot?" inquired Jim.

"I believe our enemies have killed game," Kichkinet told him. "It is good. They will stop to eat. Then we will come up with them."

Once on the trail, the young Mohawk followed it without difficulty. Several times he stooped and pointed out indistinct footprints which he declared had been made by Holcombe. Then as the day neared its end, he became more cautious.

"Achawi, we are getting close to our enemies," he said. "We must watch out."

CHAPTER XII

A DARING RESCUE

ENCOURAGED by the possibility of overtaking their enemies before night passed, Jim and Kichkinet followed eagerly along the trail. They believed that the hunters would camp where they had killed their game, and Kichkinet declared that the spot was not far away.

"Pretty soon we will come up with them," he said, confidently.

"Good," replied Jim.

They moved cautiously along the trail until the end of the day, and then Kichkinet stopped to test the wind which blew gently from the east. In a few moments he nodded and turned eagerly to Jim.

"Smoke," he said.

At that instant Jim, too, detected the telltale odor on the breeze. It was evident that the camp fire was nearby, and Jim's pulses quickened at the thought. The eyes of the Mohawk flashed triumphantly. Then they suddenly realized their peril, for they feared that at any

moment one of the warriors might return along the trail and discover them. In that event they felt certain that Holcombe would be killed without further delay.

"We must move away from here," Kichkinet said, uneasily.

They turned from the trail and went a bowshot to the northward. Then they sat down to watch and listen. Twilight was fading, and night was close at hand. The smoke odor had subsided. They heard nothing from their foes.

"We will wait here until it grows dark," said Kichkinet. "Then we will go to find the fire."

"It is good," replied Jim.

They watched silently while twilight slowly gave way to darkness. Then Jim grew impatient and eager to begin the perilous advance upon their foes, but Kichkinet cautioned him to wait.

"We must wait until these warriors feel sure that no one is about," he said.

When a third of the night had passed, he said it was time to go. They returned to a large dead pine which marked the spot where they had left the trail. Then they stopped to listen. They heard voices, a short distance to the eastward, and smelled the smoke from the fire.

"Come," whispered Kichkinet.

Aware that at any moment they might encounter their foes, they advanced with great caution. They had not gone a bowshot when Kichkinet suddenly stopped, and drew Jim to him.

"See, there is the light from the fire," he said.

Jim saw a bright glow a short distance ahead of them. A moment afterward Kichkinet resumed the perilous advance. They approached within easy bow range of the fire, and then they again stopped to watch and listen. The camp was in a dense stand of timber, and although they saw the flames flickering between the trees they were unable to see the warriors whose voices sounded plainly through the night.

"Can you tell who they are?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"No," replied Kichkinet.

Eager to identify the warriors who had captured Holcombe, they determined to approach still closer to the fire. Fearful that the slightest sound might arouse the suspicions of their foes, they advanced with the alert, silent caution of the lynx. After each step they stopped and peered anxiously between the trees in an attempt to see the fire and the warriors who sat about it. At last they discovered them. As

Kichkinet had guessed, there were six. Holcombe, however, was not among them. The discovery filled Jim with alarm.

"What has become of To-nes-sa-ah?" he asked.

"Wait," replied Kichkinet.

Before Jim could reply the Mohawk had gone. Jim waited in torturing suspense, while he attempted to guess what had happened to the famous scout. The mysterious rifle shot suggested two possibilities. Jim believed that either Holcombe had escaped from his foes, or they had killed him. For several reasons Jim was forced to believe that the latter possibility was more probable. If Holcombe had escaped, Jim felt quite certain that the warriors would have taken more precautions in making their camp for the night. Besides, he felt equally certain that if Dan had secured possession of his rifle, at least one of the warriors would have been missing from the company about the fire.

"I believe they have killed him," Jim murmured, disconsolately.

Then despair suddenly gave way to anger, and a savage desire for vengeance swept into his heart. His eyes flashed threateningly as he resolved to retaliate upon the foes who he believed had taken the life of his friend.

"If they have killed Dan, I shall take a Mohawk's vengeance upon them," Jim pledged himself.

At that moment Kichkinet returned as suddenly as he had departed. Jim was unaware of his approach until he heard him speak.

"Achawi, our brother is alive," he said, softly.

For several moments joy kept Jim silent. Then his fears vanished, and a great hope entered his heart.

"Mohawk, those are great words," he said. "Tell me how you know this."

"I saw To-nes-sa-ah lying on the ground," Kichkinet assured him. "He is over there behind those little trees. That is why we cannot see him. His hands and feet are tied."

"Who are the people who captured him?" Jim inquired, eagerly.

"Ojibwas," Kichkinet told him. "I believe they are the scouts who were watching along the trail to our village."

"Those rascals appear eager to get into a fight with us," Jim replied, savagely. "Perhaps this time we will accommodate them."

"Achawi, there is little time to spare," Kichkinet told him. "Now everything is good for us. If we wait, perhaps it will be too late. To-

nes-sa-ah is lying over there by himself. It will be easy to creep up close to him. Then we will make the war cry and rush in to fight. You must run up to To-nes-sa-ah and cut him loose. I will fight off the Ojibwas. Come, my brother, we must be quick."

"I am ready," Jim replied, calmly.

They moved cautiously toward the place where Kichkinet had seen Holcombe. When they had covered half of the distance, they dropped upon their hands and knees and crept slowly toward the cluster of little trees. As they finally reached them, they saw Holcombe. He was less than two bow lengths away, lying quietly upon his back. Jim's heart beat wildly as he looked upon the form of his friend. Holcombe appeared to be bound and helpless. Jim longed to warn him, but he realized that even the softest whisper might prove fatal. For several moments he and Kichkinet lay close to the ground, studying the warriors at the fire. Jim noted that one of the Ojibwas had Dan's powder horn and bullet pouch slung from his shoulder, while close beside him was the rifle which Holcombe valued so highly. The carcass of a deer lay upon the ground between Holcombe and the warriors, and it was evident that the Ojibwas had been feasting. The fire had burned

low, and Jim feared that at any moment the warriors might end their talk, and move nearer their captive. Delay appeared perilous.

"Are you ready?" inquired Kichkinet.

"Yes," replied Jim.

"Come!" cried Kichkinet.

As Kichkinet raised the war cry they sprang to their feet and rushed toward Holcombe. For an instant the bewildered Ojibwas stared at them in silent amazement. Then, as they saw Jim stooping to free Holcombe, they suddenly realized the object of the daring attack. The warrior who had taken Holcombe's rifle raised it to his shoulder and was about to shoot, but Kichkinet drove an arrow through him before he could pull the trigger. Demoralized by the death of their comrade and the suddenness of the attack, the remaining Ojibwas rushed for cover. Freed from his bonds, Holcombe joined Jim and Kichkinet in a reckless dash to the fire. They secured Holcombe's rifle and blanket and stripped the powder horn and bullet pouch from the lifeless form of the Ojibwa.

"Now we must run," cried Kichkinet.

At that moment, however, the Ojibwas rallied and rushed upon them. Holcombe fired, and the foremost warrior plunged headlong to earth. His companions hesitated for an instant, and

the scouts seized their opportunity and rushed into the night.

"Turn toward the west, an' keep movin'," cried Holcombe.

They ran a long distance before they finally stopped to listen. There were no sounds from their foes. Holcombe reloaded his rifle.

"They'll not come after us," he said. "Thar's only four left, an' they know we're more than a match for 'em. However, we'd best keep goin', for they're likely to meet up with friends from Ticonderoga, an' then they'll begin to look for us."

When he finished loading his rifle, they continued toward the west. For a long time they traveled in silence. Then, at the approach of daylight, they stopped to rest.

"Dan, you have caused us many anxious hours," laughed Jim. "Tell us how you fell into the hands of those Ojibwas."

"First, I'll thank you an' the Mohawk for what you've done," said Dan. "It was as slick a play as I ever saw made. How did you find us?"

"Kichkinet found your trail, and guessed what had happened and how many warriors were in the company," Jim told him.

"Mohawk, you did a real good job," laughed

Holcombe. "Now I'll tell my story. I found the trail of Trouville an' his warriors some distance west o' whar I left you. I followed it toward the north until I figured I was somewhar opposite our meetin' place. Then I cut across country to tell you about it. Pretty soon I found fresh tracks. I set out to follow 'em. I was movin' ahead easy an' careful when two o' those Ojibwas jumped out at me an' caught me off guard. I put up a real fight, but they called their friends, an' I was soon done for. That's all thar was of it. It was a bad mess, Jim, an' it's given Trouville an' his gang time to get to their hidin' place. Lad, I feel powerful bad about it."

"Dan, I have not thought of Trouville since you disappeared," replied Jim. "If harm had come to you, I fear I would have had little heart to continue the search. However, now that you have rejoined us, I feel confident we shall eventually run down our foes."

"Anyway, we'll make a big try," declared Holcombe.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAIL TURNS WESTWARD

HOLCOMBE declared that he had slept soundly each night while he was in the hands of the Ojibwas, and he insisted upon keeping watch while Jim and Kichkinet lay down to rest. The sun was high above the horizon when they finally awakened.

"We have wasted time," said Jim. "Dan, you should have called us."

"Thar's no hurry," Dan assured him. "Trouville an' his gang have gained three days' lead, an' we can't overtake 'em. Besides, we don't know whar to look for 'em. When I left the trail it was headin' due north. Mebbe it turned east or west after that. We've got considerable figurin' to do before we'll know just whar to go. Let's talk over the chances."

"My brothers, I believe the Shawnees have gone to their village," declared Kichkinet.

"That's likely," agreed Holcombe. "However, it's just as likely that Trouville an' the Ojibwas have turned toward Ticonderoga, or even gone north to join the Hurons."

"Or perhaps Trouville has retreated to his hiding place," suggested Jim.

"Yes, that's another chance," said Holcombe.

"Well, we must agree upon a plan," Jim told them. "Dan, tell us your idea."

"I believe thar's just one thing to do," said Holcombe. "We've got to separate agin an' look for the trail of Trouville headin' toward Ticonderoga. If he's gone thar, we may just as well turn about an' go back to the fort. However, if we don't find his trail in these parts, we'll set out for the west."

"Kichkinet, how do you feel about it?" inquired Jim.

"The words of To-nes-sa-ah are good," replied Kichkinet.

"Dan, I, too, agree to your plan," Jim told Holcombe. "However, if we loiter in this vicinity too long, we may find a war party from Ticonderoga on our trail."

"Thar's another chance," chuckled Holcombe. "Well, we'll keep our eyes open, an' trust to luck. It won't take long to find out if Trouville has made tracks for Ticonderoga."

Soon afterward they again separated to search for evidence of the war party. Jim continued directly toward the west; Kichkinet circled toward the north; and Holcombe turned

farther toward the south. They chose a high hill some distance to the westward for their meeting place.

Jim arrived at the base of the hill before sunset. He had seen nothing to indicate that Trouville and the war party had passed. Eager to learn if his friends had arrived, Jim imitated the notes of the white-throated sparrow. There was no response. He seated himself to wait for Holcombe and Kichkinet. At short intervals he repeated the signal. Soon after sunset he received an answer. A few moments afterward Holcombe appeared.

"I'm on hand this time," laughed Dan. "I didn't find anything but game tracks. Did you find anything?"

"No," replied Jim. "However, Kichkinet has not arrived."

"So I see," said Holcombe. "It looks like he's found something. He's a fast traveler, an' should have been here before me."

Darkness had fallen, and they were growing a bit uneasy about the Mohawk when they suddenly heard the call of the little red owl. As the call was repeated three times, they felt certain that it had been made by Kichkinet. Jim replied, and soon afterward Kichkinet joined them.

"My brothers, I found fresh tracks," he said. "I do not know who made them, but I believe they were Ojibwas."

"Which way were they headed?" inquired Holcombe.

"Ticonderoga," replied Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, why do you believe they were Ojibwas?" asked Jim.

"I believe they are the warriors who were with Ho-sa-ha-ho," said Kichkinet.

"Is Ho-sa-ha-ho with them?" Jim asked, uneasily.

"No; I looked sharp, but I did not see the tracks of Ho-sa-ha-ho," Kichkinet told him.

"Tell us how you feel about it," said Jim.

"Achawi, I believe some of those Ojibwas have left Ho-sa-ha-ho and set out for the great camp at Ticonderoga," declared Kichkinet. "Perhaps Ho-sa-ha-ho sent them there. I cannot tell about that. I do not believe Ho-sa-ha-ho is going to Ticonderoga. Perhaps he has gone with the Shawnees. Perhaps he has gone to meet the Hurons. Perhaps he has gone to his hiding place. We cannot tell about it until we find his trail."

"That's sartin," agreed Holcombe.

They camped in the timber at the base of the hill, and kept a sharp watch for the Ojibwa

scouts who, they feared, might have followed them. The night passed without alarm, however, and at daylight they continued their journey toward the west.

"We'll make for that little pond, and then I'll lead you to the place whar I left the trail," proposed Holcombe.

"Good," agreed Jim.

As Kichkinet felt certain that Trouville was not with the warriors who appeared to be traveling toward Ticonderoga, Jim felt greatly relieved. He believed that if Trouville remained away from the French stronghold, it would be only a matter of time until they would eventually come up with him. They arrived at the little lake shortly after midday. As they failed to find evidence of their foes, Dan led the way toward the place where he had turned from the trail of the war party. It was almost dark when they finally reached the spot. Aware that it would be folly to attempt to follow the trail in the fading light, they determined to wait until the next day. In the meantime Holcombe found a spring in a thicket of small pines, and they decided to camp beside it. Kichkinet had killed a rabbit and several grouse, and as they wished to conserve their rations from the fort they resolved to make a fire and broil the game.

They gathered a supply of dry sticks, and concealed the fire between two large bowlders.

"A meal fit for a king," laughed Jim, as they proceeded to enjoy the feast.

A moment afterward they heard a sharp crackling in the undergrowth, a short distance at their right. Convinced that something was moving through the woods at that spot, they seized their weapons and rose to their feet. Then for many moments they stood together in silence, listening for further sounds from the darkness. All was still. The silence, however, increased their suspense. They were eager to learn the origin of the careless footfall which had aroused their suspicions. Perhaps it had been made by a deer or an elk coming to drink at the spring—perhaps an Ojibwa scout was attempting to find them. They waited anxiously for a clue which might tell them what they wished to know, but the stillness was unbroken. The scouts were perplexed. It seemed probable that the sounds had been made by some animal which was approaching the spring when it suddenly caught their scent and turned away. In that event, however, they believed they would have heard it moving off. On the other hand, if a scout had blundered into a tangle of fallen timber he would be careful to extricate him-

self as noiselessly as possible. The silence, therefore, became significant.

"Mohawk, what do you make of it?" Jim asked, softly.

"Sh," cautioned Kichkinet.

It was evident that the Mohawk had suddenly heard something. A moment later Jim and Holcombe heard soft, stealthy footfalls directly behind them. They cocked the rifles and turned to face the danger. Kichkinet had fitted an arrow to his bow, and was peering eagerly into the darkness. In a few moments he lowered his bow and laughed softly.

"It is Na-o-geh," he said.

"How do you know that?" Jim asked him.

"I smell him," replied Kichkinet.

In the meantime Holcombe had begun to sniff the air. A moment afterward he agreed with Kichkinet.

"The Mohawk is right," he said. "It's a bull elk; I smell him, plain."

With customary caution the elk had approached against the wind, and had caught the scent of the men who had taken possession of the spring. Alert to its peril, the elk had stopped to investigate, and for an instant they caught the glow of its eyes as it faced them within easy bowshot. Then it turned and

trotted away into the night. For a moment or so the snapping of twigs marked its flight through the undergrowth, but the sounds suddenly ceased as the bull entered the heavy timber.

"Thar goes my worry," chuckled Holcombe.

"And mine," said Jim.

They felt relieved to know that the elk had been the cause of their alarm. Nevertheless, they determined to take turns at watching until daylight. The night passed without further incident, and at sunrise they returned to the trail of the war party.

"Now for the real hunt," Holcombe said, gayly, as they turned toward the north.

The trail was old and difficult to follow, and they made slow progress. In some places the tracks had been entirely obliterated by a fresh layer of fallen leaves. At those spots Kichkinet and Holcombe displayed rare skill in finding clues which enabled them to continue on the trail. At midday it still led toward the north. Holcombe stopped, and shook his head.

"What is wrong?" Jim asked him.

"I'm wonderin' why we don't strike the trail of those warriors who went toward Ticonderoga," replied Holcombe. " 'Pears like they must have turned off before this."

"It does seem strange," agreed Jim. "Mohawk, how do you feel about it?"

"Pretty soon we will know about it," Kichkinet told them.

It was some time later when they finally found the place where the war party had separated. One trail turned toward the east, while the larger company went toward the west. Holcombe and Kichkinet spent considerable time reconnoitering.

"It is good," Kichkinet said, finally. "I have found the tracks of Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother. They have gone with the Shawnees."

"Good, good," Jim cried, heartily. "Dan, I feared that Trouville might go north to join the Hurons. Then it might have been impossible to take him. However, now that he has gone with the Shawnees, I have great hopes of success."

"It begins to look more promisin'," Holcombe said, quietly.

CHAPTER XIV

PERILOUS GROUND

THEY turned toward the west and followed eagerly along the trail. From the tops of the ridges they saw familiar landmarks to the southward, and Kichkinet declared that the Mohawk camp was only a day's journey in that direction. He was eager to return to his village to ask Black Cloud and Stands Alone and Dancing Wolf to join the expedition.

"Those great scouts have been to the Shawnee camp," he said. "I believe they will be able to help us."

"Dan, I favor the plan; how do you feel about it?" Jim asked Holcombe.

"We may need 'em before we get through with this job," replied Dan.

"Kichkinet, ask your brothers to go with us," said Jim.

"It is good," replied Kichkinet.

"How about meetin'?" asked Holcombe.

"Follow the trail; we will come up with you before you reach the Shawnee camp," Kichkinet assured him.

Then he left them and hurried away toward the south. Jim and Holcombe continued along the trail of the war party. At sunset it led them to the shore of a picturesque little woodland lake, and they decided to stop there for the night. They found the remains of several camp fires, and it was evident that the Shawnees had passed a night at that spot.

"Jim, lad, it 'pears like we're runnin' a cold trail," Holcombe told Jim. "I figure Trouville arrived at the Shawnee camp several days ago. Jim, why do you suppose he went back? He's led the Shawnees in two losin' fights, an' I don't believe he'll get much of a welcome. However, I'll wager he expects to gain something from the visit. Like as not he'll try to lead the Shawnees into some fresh mischief before he leaves 'em."

"Dan, that is just what I fear," replied Jim. "Perhaps Trouville has gone back with the Shawnees to make excuses for the failure of the war expedition. However, I believe, as you do, that there is some other reason for his long journey to the Shawnee camp. I hope he will remain there until we can overtake him."

"What is your plan?" inquired Holcombe.

"Dan, at present I am without a plan," Jim told him. "Much will depend upon what we

are able to learn at the Shawnee camp. Perhaps Trouville himself will give us our opportunity."

"That's the correct idee," agreed Dan. "We can't do much figurin' until we know what Trouville intends to do."

Their talk was interrupted by the call of a loon on the other side of the lake. They moved cautiously to the edge of the water, and sat down to listen. It was not long, however, before they heard the bird splashing noisily, and they knew that the call was genuine. Aware that voices carry a long distance over water, they rose and moved farther back into the woods.

"Dan, have you been here before?"

"No," replied Holcombe. "An' do you know, Jim, I'm tryin' to figure out why the Shawnees came so far north. As I figure it their camp is a considerable distance to the south'ard."

"Perhaps they wished to avoid another encounter with the Mohawks."

"Mebbe so," said Dan.

They shared the night watch, but heard nothing to arouse their suspicions. Before sunrise they resumed their way along the Shawnee trail. Aware that they were entering perilous ground, they advanced with more caution. They ap-

peared to have found a hunter's paradise, for game signs were everywhere through the woods. As the day advanced, they saw deer and elk and moose, and several times they found the great, clumsy footprints of the bear. Wild turkeys ran through the hickory groves, and grouse flushed from the thickets. Immense flocks of wild pigeons darkened the sky. Jim became enthusiastic.

"What a glorious hunting ground," he said.

"Sort o' makes your trigger finger itch, don't it?" laughed Holcombe.

However, they had no thought of yielding to the temptation, for they knew that the report of a rifle might prove fatal to their plans. It was not long before they noted that the trail was leading farther to the southward. At last the Shawnees appeared to have turned toward their camp.

"Now we know where they are going," said Jim.

"It looks like they've come a long ways out of their course," replied Holcombe. "However, mebbe thar's a good reason for it."

"I believe their only object was to avoid the Mohawks," Jim told him.

"It looks like it," said Dan.

Then as the trail made another abrupt turn

toward the south, Holcombe stopped and turned to Jim.

"We're sartin the Shawnees are makin' for their camp, an' it 'pears like we're wastin' good time pokin' along on their trail," he said. "I propose that we strike direct for the Shawnee camp. It'll save considerable time, an', as I figure it, we've little time to spare if we plan to come up with Trouville before he leaves the Shawnees."

"Dan, you are entirely correct. Now that we feel sure that the Shawnees are bound for their village, I can see no advantage in attempting to keep on their trail."

"Then we'll leave it, an' be on our way," said Holcombe.

He left the trail and turned toward the south. At the end of the day they found themselves in familiar country to the westward of the Mohawk hunting grounds. Then they turned toward the west and traveled until darkness compelled them to stop for the night. They chose their camp site beside a stream that flowed from the north.

"Dan, as I remember it, the Shawnee camp should be about two days' travel farther to the westward," Jim told Holcombe.

"Correct," agreed Dan.

"When do you believe our Mohawk friends will overtake us?"

"I don't expect to meet 'em before we get close to the Shawnee camp," said Dan. "Here's how I figure it. If Kichkinet kept movin' pretty much through the night, as I believe he did, he should have reached his village soon after sunrise to-day. Then thar was a big talk with his friends, an' it's unlikely he got away agin until some time after midday. I figure we're a long day's journey west an' north o' the Mohawk village. It's likely the Mohawks will strike straight for the Shawnee camp, but even so we're a full day ahead of 'em. However, they'll travel fast, an' mebbe they'll keep goin' far into the night. I figure we'll meet 'em within a day's journey of the camp."

Late the following day, as they were moving cautiously along the edge of a large tamarack swamp, Dan suddenly stopped and stooped to examine the ground. As Jim joined him, Holcombe pointed at a fresh moccasin track.

"Some one is ahead of us, an' not so far ahead, either," he said. "Let's find out whar he came from."

He rose and followed slowly back along the trail. It was fresh and quite easy to follow, and within a bowshot it turned sharply toward

the south. Holcombe stopped, and smiled at Jim.

"That's why we didn't find it before," he said. "Jim, it looks like this fellow has come from the Mohawk river. So far as I can see he's alone. You've looked sharp, can you make out more than one track?"

"No," replied Jim.

For some moments Dan studied the moccasin track in silence. He appeared to be considering the possibilities.

"Perhaps it is one of the Mohawks," suggested Jim.

Dan shook his head. Then he stooped and examined the track with his fingers. When he had finished he still continued silent. Jim waited for his decision.

"No; I don't believe he's a Mohawk," Dan said, finally. "It's likely our friends will keep together until they come up with us, an' if it was a stray Mohawk hunter he'd be unlikely to turn west—unless he circled the swamp. That's a new idee. Come, we'll go back an' see if it works out."

They returned to the edge of the swamp and followed the trail of the mysterious traveler. As the ground was marshy and free from undergrowth the tracks showed plainly. It was evi-

dent that the traveler was alone. However, when the trail reached the other side of the swamp, it continued directly toward the west. Holcombe winked at Jim.

"I figured it warn't a Mohawk, an' now I'm plumb sartin about it," he said. "This buck is a Shawnee; I'd almost wager my rifle on it."

"Dan, you must be mighty certain even to suggest such a wager," laughed Jim.

"For sartin," chuckled Holcombe.

"How long ago do you believe this fellow passed?"

"Some time after midday," said Dan.

"Then he cannot be far ahead of us."

"I figure he's close enough to be dangerous," replied Holcombe. "Not but what I believe we're more than a match for one Shawnee, but we don't want him to find us. If the Shawnees larn that two white scouts are headin' toward their camp, it won't take Trouville long to guess who we are. Then we'll not only lose our chance, but we'll be likely to lose our hair as well."

Jim nodded.

"Jim, we'd best stop," Dan said, a few moments later. "It will be dark soon, an' thar's no tellin' whar this buck has camped down for the night. We don't want to run into him;

neither do we want to get ahead of him. We'll hole up until daylight, and then we'll follow him to his camp."

"Good," said Jim.

They made no attempt to find water, but moved a bowshot from the trail and found comfortable shelter beneath the dense top of a large pine that had been overturned by the wind. It offered them a secure hiding place, and as they had little fear of being disturbed they decided that it would be unnecessary to keep watch.

"Now for a real good sleep," said Jim.

"I'm ready," laughed Dan.

A sudden biting cold descended upon the wilderness during the night, and when Jim and Holcombe crawled from their shelter at dawn they found the ground white with frost.

"Winter has struck the war post," laughed Dan.

"It looks like it," said Jim.

A moment later Holcombe turned his head and appeared to be listening. Jim looked anxiously into the shadows. Then he, too, caught the soft, unmistakable ripple of running water.

"It's over here," Dan told him.

They went a short bowshot from the fallen

tree and found a tiny stream flowing merrily beneath a jumble of rocks and brush. They followed it and came upon a little rock-bound pool, and then the stream again disappeared beneath an intricate tangle of fallen timber. They lay down at the edge of the pool and drank heartily.

"Ah-h-h, that's good," said Dan.

"Too good to leave," laughed Jim, as he submerged his face in the icy water.

As they rose to their feet several blue jays discovered them, and began a noisy commotion in the top of a nearby pine. The scouts listened uneasily. Holcombe shook his head.

"That's bad," he said. "Those noisy rascals are a nuisance. Once they see you, they're not content until they've screeched the news to the four winds. If that Shawnee buck hears 'em he's likely to get suspicious. Mebbe he'll come pokin' over this way to find out what the fuss is about. We'd best watch out."

As one of the birds descended to a low limb of the pine Holcombe suddenly aimed his rifle. Jim looked at him in astonishment. In a moment, however, Holcombe lowered the weapon and chuckled mischievously.

"Jim, I'm not fool enough to pull trigger," he said. "I was just showin' that blue rascal what I'd *like* to do."

"Dan, for an instant I feared you had lost your wits," laughed Jim.

"Lad, my wits an' my scalp will likely go at the same time."

They waited until the jays finally tired of watching them and flew away. Then they returned to the trail of the lone traveler. The sky was flushed with crimson and a narrow band of gold extended along the eastern horizon. The sun was about to appear. Jim realized that much might happen before it finally went down in the west.

"Dan, before this day ends we should be close to the Shawnee camp," he told Holcombe.

"Close enough to make things interestin'," replied Dan.

Then their thoughts turned upon the unknown traveler who had preceded them. If he had stopped at nightfall, they realized that he could not be far ahead, and the thought made them cautious. Dan followed the trail with great care, stopping at frequent intervals to examine the tracks. He was eager to discover the place where the traveler had stopped for the night.

"Jim, it 'pears like this buck kept goin' right on into the night," he told Jim.

"Perhaps he was making for some familiar camp site," said Jim.

"I'm figurin' that chance," replied Holcombe. "Anyway, we'll soon know about it."

When they failed to find anything to prove that the traveler had turned aside for the night, Dan became uneasy.

"It begins to look like he was in a big hurry to reach the Shawnee camp," he said. "Now what was the reason for so much speed? I figure he carried important news. Mebbe he was prowlin' around the Mohawk country an' saw Kichkinet an' his friends."

"Dan, you don't believe that, do you?" Jim asked in alarm.

"Thar's a chance," said Dan.

Jim's heart grew heavy at the thought. He feared that if the Mohawks had been discovered, all chance of taking Trouville was gone. For some moments it filled him with despair. He regretted that he had permitted Kichkinet to return to his friends. Then Holcombe suddenly stopped and knelt to examine the trail. In a few moments he rose and moved slowly forward, stooping low and searching the ground with painstaking care. When he had gone a bowshot, he turned eagerly to Jim.

"That buck turned off back thar by that big rock," he said. "Then he came back here at this spot. See, here's his fresh track. Thar's

no trail between this track an' the one back thar by the rock. I figure he turned off at that place to find shelter for the night. We'll go back an' see what we can find out about it."

They returned to the rock, and Dan followed the tracks toward the north. Jim kept sharp watch ahead while Holcombe gave his attention to the trail. They had not gone far when they came upon a bubbling spring, and there the trail ended. A short distance from the spring they found the remains of a fire. The ashes were still warm. The rock against which the fire had been made bore the evidence of smoke and heat, and it was plain that many other fires had been lighted at that spot. The scouts felt certain that it was a favorite camp site of the Shawnees.

"Here's whar he lay down," said Holcombe, as he examined the ground at one side of the fire.

"Dan, we may be sure that this fellow never would have made a fire, and stopped here to sleep, if he had seen the Mohawks moving this way," said Jim.

"That's sartin," agreed Dan. "When an Injun makes a fire, an' lays down beside it to sleep, you can figure he feels pretty safe."

Having learned what they wished to know,

they left the camp site and went back to follow the trail. Soon afterward they lost it on a steep rocky hillside. Dan, however, showed little concern.

"Let him go," he said. "We're pretty nigh sartin who he is an' whar he's goin'. That's good enough for now. Anyway, we may pick up his trail somewhar on the other side o' the ridge."

"We should be able to locate the camp from the top of this ridge," Jim said, hopefully.

"So I figure," replied Dan.

However, when they reached the summit of the ridge they found their view obstructed by a still higher ridge a short distance farther to the westward. Both instantly recognized it as a familiar landmark. Beyond it was the river beside which the Shawnees had located their village.

"We'll look around a bit before we move on," proposed Holcombe.

In a few moments they came upon an open trail that turned down the western slope of the ridge. It came from the north and appeared to lead toward the Shawnee camp. They found many footprints, and Holcombe felt certain that they had been made by Trouville and his warriors. He followed the trail a short dis-

tance back along the ridge, and then he dropped to his hands and knees and carefully examined one of the tracks.

"Here's a boot mark, an' the track turns out," he said.

"Trouville," said Jim.

Dan nodded.

CHAPTER XV

A COUNCIL OF WAR

CONVINCED that it would be perilous to attempt to follow the Shawnee trail, Jim and Holcombe kept farther to the northward. Shortly before sunset they arrived at the base of the high ridge and began the steep difficult climb to the top. They stopped at frequent intervals, and Jim imitated the notes of the white-throated sparrow. The signals went unanswered.

"Dan, I expected to meet the Mohawks before this," Jim said, anxiously.

"They'll come," Holcombe assured him. "I figure we'll meet 'em somewhar along this ridge. No matter which way they come, they've got to cross it to reach the Shawnee camp, an' they'll figure the same way about us."

"It appears to be the most likely meeting place," agreed Jim.

"For sartin," said Dan.

They toiled slowly to the top of the ridge, and then they saw the Shawnee camp. It was

situated along the easterly side of a large river that flowed through a wide fertile valley. The village was protected on three sides by a high log stockade, but the side toward the water was open. For some moments the scouts studied the camp in silence. It awakened memories in each of them. In the days before the trouble with the French, Holcombe had visited the Shawnees on friendly trading expeditions. Jim had been a captive in the village two years before.

"Jim, before all this trouble started, I could walk down into that camp and receive a friendly welcome," said Dan.

"Dan, my own memories of the place are far less pleasant," laughed Jim.

They saw a number of canoes on the river, and many people moving about the village. Jim wondered whether Trouville and Stockley were among them. Smoke was rising before some of the lodges, and the Shawnees appeared to be making preparations for the evening meal.

"Dan, do you believe Trouville is still in the camp?"

"Bless me, Jim, I've no idee," replied Holcombe. "However, if the Mohawks come, I believe we'll find out about it before the night passes. It takes a Mohawk to find out such

things. Black Cloud has done it once, an' I'll wager he can do it agin."

"I feel certain of that," said Jim. "However, the Mohawks have failed to appear, and I am growing anxious."

"I'm a bit puzzled about 'em myself," Dan told him. "It 'pears like they've had time to get here."

"Perhaps it would be well to look for them before night comes."

"No, Jim, I don't believe it. We'd best wait until they find us. If they reach the ridge, they'll search us out."

Holcombe had barely ceased speaking when they heard the notes of the white-throated sparrow, farther along the ridge in the direction of the Shawnee trail. In a few moments the plaintive notes were repeated, and this time they sounded nearer. The scouts remained silent. They had expected the Mohawks to approach from the other direction, and they were somewhat suspicious. Then the song began again, but ceased abruptly after the second note.

"It is Kichkinet!" Jim said, joyously.

He immediately replied to the signal, and in a few moments the Mohawks appeared. There were six in the company, and each was a famous

scout. Besides Kichkinet, there were Black Cloud, and Stands Alone, and Dancing Wolf, and Little Bear, and Yellow Eagle.

"Achawi, we have found you—it is good," said Kichkinet. "We would have been here sooner, but Black Cloud and Stands Alone were away from the village on a hunt, and I sent Skennek to find them."

"My brothers, I am glad to see you," Jim told the Mohawks. "Now I believe we will do what we have set out to do."

The Mohawks were painted for war. After they had exchanged greetings with Jim and Holcombe, they spent many moments watching the Shawnee camp. At last Black Cloud turned to Jim.

"Achawi, the day is going," he said. "You are the leader. We have come here to help you. Tell us what you propose to do."

They formed the council circle, and Jim explained his plan.

"My brothers, Ho-sa-ha-ho is our enemy," he said. "You all know he led the Shawnees and the Ojibwas against your village. Some of your brothers were killed in that fight. Ho-sa-ha-ho is to blame for it."

The Mohawks murmured angrily.

"Mohawks, Ho-sa-ha-ho has also led his war

parties against my people. He has burned our villages and killed our women and children. The Great White Chief is very mad about it. He says, 'We must catch Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother, and then all this trouble will end.' Mohawks, the Great White Chief has sent us to catch Ho-sa-ha-ho. We have followed him a long way. We have found out that he came here with his brothers, the Shawnees. Now we wish to find out if he is still in their camp. If he is there, we will wait until he leaves the village. Then we will follow on his trail and try to catch him. My brothers, our hearts are bad against Ho-sa-ha-ho, but we must not kill him. The Great White Chief says, 'Bring Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother to my village.' We must do as he tells us to do. Mohawks, this is what I propose to do. I have called you here to help me because I know that all of you are brave scouts. When it grows dark, I will ask some of you to go to the Shawnee camp to find out if Ho-sa-ha-ho is there. Now, my brothers, I have told you what I propose to do."

"Achawi, I have found out how to get close to the Shawnee camp," said Black Cloud. "When it grows dark I will go down there and find out what you wish to know."

"It is good," said Jim.

"My brothers, it would be foolish for Black Cloud to go down there alone," said Dancing Wolf. "I will go with him."

"I am going with Black Cloud," Stands Alone declared, emphatically. "I went with him the last time, and I am the one to go with him now."

Kichkinet, and Little Bear and Yellow Eagle also were eager to accompany Black Cloud, and for some moments the discussion threatened to end in discord. Jim glanced uneasily at Holcombe. The latter frowned and shook his head. Then Jim determined to assert his authority as war leader.

"My brothers, I see that all of you wish to go with Black Cloud," he said. "That would be foolish. It will be hard to get near the Shawnee camp. If you all go down there, the Shawnees will surely hear you. Then we cannot do what we came here to do. The Great White Chief will be very mad. He will say, 'Achawi and his brothers the Mohawks are like children. They got near the Shawnee village, but they did not know what to do.'

"My brothers, there are few of us, but there are many Shawnees. We must be sharp. If Ho-sa-ha-ho finds out that we are here, he will

stay in the Shawnee camp. I am your leader, and you must listen to my words. Now I am going to ask Stands Alone to go with Black Cloud. It will be enough. The rest of us will wait here until our brothers come back and tell us what they have found out. Then we will know what to do. Achawi has spoken."

The Mohawks spent a long time in silent meditation. Jim waited anxiously. Would they accept his words and bow to his will? He glanced sharply at Kichkinet. The young warrior nodded. Jim felt encouraged. Then Kichkinet began to speak.

"My brothers, the words of Achawi are good," he said. "We all wish to go down there and kill some Shawnees, but I see that it would be foolish. Achawi has come here to do a big thing. He has called us here to help him. Achawi is our war leader. He has led us in some big fights. My brothers, we must do as Achawi tells us to do. Then the Great White Chief will feel good about it."

"Achawi, I see that what you propose is good," said Dancing Wolf. "I will not talk against it."

"My brothers, I would like to go down there with Black Cloud and Stands Alone, but I will

stay here because I see that it is the best thing to do," declared Little Bear.

"Achawi, I will do as you ask us to do," said Yellow Eagle.

"My brothers, now I see that we all feel the same way about this thing," Jim told them. "It is good."

A few moments afterward they ended the council. Then each Mohawk unrolled his blanket and produced a buckskin bag which contained several days' rations of dried deer meat and hard, round cakes composed of corn meal, beans, and dried berries. Kichkinet had brought a fresh supply of food for Jim and Holcombe. As they ate, the Mohawks relaxed into a jolly, light-hearted comradeship, and for the moment the hated Shawnees and their treacherous ally from the north were forgotten. When they had finished eating, Black Cloud led the way to a little spring, a short distance down the eastern slope of the ridge.

It was almost dark when they returned to the top of the ridge. For some moments they stood together, and watched the fires in the Shawnee camp. Then, as darkness finally settled down, Black Cloud and Stands Alone prepared to set out on their perilous undertaking.

"We will go down there and watch at the

edge of the woods," Black Cloud told Jim. "When the way is clear we will creep up to the camp and try to find out what we wish to know."

"My brothers, you are very brave," said Jim. "You will be in great danger, but I believe you are sharp enough to fool the Shawnees."

A moment afterward Black Cloud and Stands Alone started down the side of the ridge. Their companions continued to watch the Shawnee camp in silence. It was not long, however, before they discovered something which awakened their interest. A large fire had been lighted in the center of the village, and the Shawnees appeared to have assembled for a council.

"It is good," said Dancing Wolf. "Now our brothers will find out if Ho-sa-ha-ho is in the camp."

However, when the night was half gone, a wild commotion suddenly broke out in the Shawnee village, and the little company of scouts on top of the ridge listened uneasily. They saw the Shawnees, like black pigmies, capering frantically about the fire. The night rang with their piercing yells, and the excited barking of the dogs. Jim turned to Holcombe in alarm.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"It looks bad," Holcombe replied, soberly.

"You don't mean—" Jim hesitated to express his fears.

"Yes, thar's a chance that the Shawnees have caught our scouts."

Jim was crushed by the possibility. He moved away, and for some moments stood by himself listening to the wild bedlam that rose from the valley. Then Holcombe touched him on the arm.

"Let's see how the Mohawks feel about it," he said.

"My brothers, what do you make of this thing?" Jim asked them.

"It is bad," said Kichkinet. "Perhaps the Shawnees have caught our brothers. Listen. They are shouting the war cry."

"Achawi, we are troubled about this thing," declared Dancing Wolf. "Something big has happened down there at the camp. Perhaps the Shawnees are about to kill our brothers. We are Mohawks. We must go down there and find out about it."

"Go, my brothers," Jim told them.

"If the Shawnees have killed Stands Alone and Black Cloud, we will bring a great war party here and wipe out that village," Yellow Eagle cried, fiercely.

"If the Shawnees have killed our brothers, I will lead the war party to the Shawnee camp," Jim pledged himself.

"It is good," the Mohawks told him.

Then they hastened away into the night. For a long time Jim and Holcombe kept silent. The commotion in the Shawnee camp continued, and at short intervals the war cry rose above the din and echoed threateningly between the hills.

"Dan, I fear that the loyalty of Black Cloud and Stands Alone may have cost them their lives at the torture stake," Jim said, sadly.

"It looks bad," replied Holcombe.

CHAPTER XVI

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS

BLACK CLOUD and Stands Alone moved slowly through the woods until they reached the base of the ridge, and then they stopped to listen. As they heard nothing to alarm them, they sat down at the edge of the timber to agree upon a plan. The Shawnee camp was a short distance farther to the southward in a wide, open meadow which made approach difficult and perilous. However, upon his previous reconnaissance, Black Cloud had discovered a small opening between the logs of the stockade at the north side of the village. It was close to the council circle, and offered him an opportunity to see and hear what was transpiring in the Shawnee camp.

"We will keep along the edge of the woods until we get near the camp," said Black Cloud. "Then I will crawl out and peep into the village."

"I will go with you," proposed Stands Alone.

"No, my brother; that would be foolish," Black Cloud told him. "We must watch out

for the dogs. If two of us crawl out there, perhaps they will find us. You must watch in the woods. If anything happens to me, you must go back and tell my brothers about it. Stands Alone, this is the only way to do this thing. It is the way we did it before, and everything was good."

"I will listen to your words," agreed Stands Alone.

"It is good," said Black Cloud. "Now we must move ahead."

They advanced carefully along the edge of the woods until they were opposite the camp. Then they again stopped to listen. The night was clear and cold, but there were few stars. Black Cloud was thankful for the darkness.

"Great Ha-wen-ne-yu had wiped away the stars, so that it will be hard for our enemies to see us," he said.

"It is good," replied Stands Alone.

Their greatest fear was of the dogs. They knew that there were many in the camp, and there was a strong possibility that some of them might be prowling about outside of the stockade. Once they caught the scent of strangers, they would be sure to arouse the camp. Under other circumstances Black Cloud would have waited until he felt quite certain that the dogs had

withdrawn into the village and settled down for the night. At this time, however, he realized that delay might prevent him from learning what he wished to know. Unless he could reconnoiter the camp before the Shawnees retired to the lodges, it would be impossible to learn if Trouville and Stockley were in the village. Therefore, he determined to approach the camp at once. He moistened his finger and held it above his head. There was little wind, but it blew from the river.

"The wind comes from the water," he told Stands Alone.

Then, as he was about to begin the perilous approach, the camp was suddenly illuminated. Sparks rose above the stockade in the center of the village. A moment afterward the Mohawks heard some one crying out in loud tones.

"The Shawnees are coming together for a council," said Black Cloud. "It is good. It will keep the warriors in the camp, and I will see if Ho-sa-ha-ho is with them."

"Everything is good for us," chuckled Stands Alone.

"It must be the work of great Ha-wen-ne-yu," declared Black Cloud. "Now I am going ahead."

"Watch sharp," cautioned Stands Alone.

"Yes, yes," replied Black Cloud.

He left the timber and moved cautiously toward the camp. When he had gone a bowshot, he stopped to listen. Voices sounded plainly from the village, but Black Cloud gave little attention to them. For the moment his thoughts were entirely of the dogs. He listened anxiously to hear them passing through the high dry grass which covered the meadow. As he failed to hear them, he moved on. The stockade was several long bowshots away, and Black Cloud realized that each stride was increasing his peril. As he advanced, the noise in the Shawnee camp increased, and the Mohawk was perplexed as he heard laughter, and shouts, and snatches of song. He believed that the Shawnees were making merry in some important ceremony. The possibility pleased him.

"I believe Ho-sa-ha-ho is in this camp," he told himself.

Then he suddenly heard a soft rustling in the grass directly ahead of him. He stopped in alarm, and fitted an arrow to his bow. The sounds had ceased, but Black Cloud feared to move. He looked anxiously into the darkness, expecting to see the flash of angry eyes, for he felt quite certain that he had encountered one of the dogs. If he discovered it, he determined

to drive his arrow through it, before it could give the alarm. The stillness baffled him. He wondered if the dog had caught his scent and slunk away. It appeared unlikely. Perhaps it had crouched, and was waiting to spring upon him as he approached. It was a long time before he dared to advance. Then, as he finally moved forward, he again heard the sounds in the dry grass. This time they were close beside him, and he flashed about to meet the expected attack. At that moment the startled creature bounded past him. Black Cloud laughed softly.

"It was only Muschgingus, the rabbit," he said.

It was some moments before he recovered from his alarm, and then he again moved slowly toward the stockade. The noise in the Shawnee camp continued, and at short intervals the war cry rang defiantly through the night. Black Cloud was at a loss to account for the tumult. Then two interesting possibilities came to his mind. Perhaps the Shawnees had suddenly turned upon Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother; perhaps Ho-sa-ha-ho had roused them for another war expedition against his foes.

"I must find out about it," said Black Cloud.

At the end of another slow, cautious advance

he reached the stockade at the rear of the camp. Alert to his peril, he raised his face toward the sky and made a silent appeal to Ha-wen-ne-yu.

"Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, help me in what I am about to do.
Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, make me brave and strong.
Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, make me sharper than the Shawnees.
Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, let me live to see my people."

Then for some moments Black Cloud stood against the stockade, listening to the wild bedlam of sounds which rose from the camp. He heard the dogs barking furiously, and he believed that most of them were in the village. The thought gave him confidence, and he advanced along the stockade. When he finally reached the end of it, he again stopped to listen. The murmur of women's voices sounded from the other side of the stockade, and Black Cloud believed that he was close by a lodge. He turned the corner of the stockade and moved cautiously along the north side of the camp. The center of the camp was lighted by the glow from the fire, but the stockade was in the shadows. His objective point was a long bowshot ahead of him.

"Pretty soon I will be there," he told himself, encouragingly.

He covered half of the distance. Then he stopped. The most perilous part of his approach was before him. The noise from the camp had suddenly ceased. Some one was addressing the Shawnees. Convinced that his opportunity was at hand, Black Cloud hastened forward. He had not gone a bow length when he was stopped by a low threatening snarl that sounded from the darkness a short distance at his right. This time he had no doubts. The ominous warning was unmistakable. At last he had met one of the dogs. Hastily fitting an arrow to his bow, Black Cloud searched the shadows for the surly brute that threatened him with disaster. Then he again heard it growling, but was unable to see it. In a few moments he heard footfalls in the dry grass. Was it approaching? Black Cloud waited in deadly suspense. Another low challenge came from the night. The Mohawk stood motionless, expecting, each moment, to hear the furious baying that would alarm the camp. Long, torturing moments passed, but the dog failed to approach. At last he heard it moving away toward the river. He believed it was returning to the camp. He moistened his fingers and tested the wind. It was scarcely perceptible, but continued from the river. Black Cloud drew a deep breath of

relief. Then he suddenly raised his face toward the heavens.

"Great Ha-wen-ne-yu, I thank you," he said, reverently.

He waited until he believed the dog was well on its way, and then he advanced rapidly along the stockade, watching closely for the little opening between the logs. The man in the camp had ended his talk, and for a moment there was silence. Then another wild outburst of yells rose through the night. At that moment Black Cloud discovered the hole in the stockade.

As he peeped eagerly into the camp, he saw a great company of Shawnee warriors assembled about the fire. They suddenly became silent as a swarthy, broad-shouldered man, attired in the gaudy dress of the Canadian voyageur, rose to address them. Black Cloud recognized him at once as Jacques Trouville or Ho-sa-ha-ho. A moment afterward he discovered Stockley seated among the warriors. Then Ho-sa-ha-ho began to talk in the Shawnee tongue. Black Cloud was entirely familiar with the dialect.

"Shawnees, your great chief has spoken big words," said Ho-sa-ha-ho. "My heart feels good, for now I know that you trust me. It is good, my brothers. I have told you about our great fight with the boastful Mohawks. I have

told you how we broke into their camp and killed many of their warriors. I have told you how we went down into the country of those white men and wiped out their villages. We have brought you the strong water to make you feel good. It is the drink for brave warriors. It is what makes the white men so strong. Well, my brothers, there is plenty more in their villages. Pretty soon we will go down there to get it. I will lead your warriors. We will kill many of those white people and wipe out their villages. We will take many scalps. I have sent my Ojibwa brothers to awaken the fierce Hurons. I will bring them here to help you fight the white men. The Ojibwas will come with them. It will be a bigger war party than any of you have ever seen. Even your old men have never seen anything like it. No one will be able to stand against us. We will break down the forts of the white men, and kill the soldiers. Then we will destroy their villages and kill the people. When we have done that, we will turn against the Mohawks. They are the friends of those white men. We will destroy them. Then your people and my people will live as brothers. The Hurons and the Ojibwas will go back to their lodges, and there will be no one to disturb us."

Ho-sa-ha-ho paused to note the effect of his words. He glanced toward Stockley. The latter jumped to his feet and yelled wildly. The wily bit of stratagem was entirely successful. Inflamed by the rum with which Trouville had supplied them, the excited Shawnees danced furiously about the fire, shouting their war cry and uttering insults and threats against their foes. Trouville laughed heartily. Black Cloud watched him with flashing eyes. The deceitful falsehoods had roused the fighting blood of the Mohawk, and if opportunity had offered, he would have driven his arrow through the heart of the man who had uttered them. As he saw the bewildered Shawnees staggering helplessly about the fire, Black Cloud understood the cause of the wild tumult which he had heard as he approached the camp. Then Trouville suddenly raised his hand, and commanded silence. It was some moments, however, before the confused Shawnees finally obeyed him.

"My brothers, continue to listen to my words," he said. "When the sun appears I will set out on my journey to the great Huron camp. My white brother and these three brave Ojibwas will go with me. You must take us up the river in your canoes. It will save time. At the end of the day we will leave you and

set out on our way toward the-place-where-the-sun-appears. You must not let those white men or their brothers the Mohawks find out what we propose to do. Keep close in your village until I bring the great war party. Now, my brothers, I have told you what I propose to do.''

As Trouville finished his talk, a tall powerful warrior, whom Black Cloud recognized as the Shawnee chief, rose unsteadily to his feet. For some moments he stared confusedly about the company, and appeared unable to rally his thoughts. At last, however, he recovered control of himself, and began to talk.

''My brother, you have given us big words,'' he said. ''However, we believe you will make these things come true. Now listen sharp to what I am about to say. I wish you to remain with us until the war party comes here. Send these Ojibwas to bring their brothers and the Hurons.''

''Yes, yes, send the Ojibwas,'' cried the Shawnees.

''My brothers, it would be useless,'' Trouville told them. ''I am the only one who can bring that great war party together. If I do not go to the Huron camp, the Hurons and the Ojibwas will remain in their lodges. They will wait for my words. If I remain here, we can-

not do the great things which I have told you about. Now, my brothers, you see that I must go to the Huron camp."

"Yes; now we see that you must go," declared the Shawnee chief.

Black Cloud smiled triumphantly. He lingered a moment to identify the three Ojibwa scouts, and he nodded significantly as he noted that neither Ho-sa-ha-ho nor his companions showed any effect of the wild debauch which had demoralized the Shawnees.

"Ho-sa-ha-ho, you are too sharp for the foolish Shawnees, but I do not believe you are sharp enough for the Mohawks," Black Cloud laughed, softly.

Then, having learned what he wished to know, he turned from the stockade and vanished into the night. He went a bowshot toward the north, and then he turned toward the east. When he felt certain that he had passed the camp, he ran toward the place where he had left Stands Alone. As he finally drew near the base of the ridge he stopped, and imitated the bark of the little gray fox. Three times he repeated the signal, and then he listened. Several moments passed. Then he heard an answer, some distance farther toward the north. He turned in that direction. When he came within

easy bow range of the timber he again stopped and repeated the signal. Stands Alone replied, and Black Cloud advanced and found him waiting at the edge of the woods.

"Black Cloud, you have come back—it is good," Stands Alone said, heartily. "When I heard that great noise at the camp I believed the Shawnees had caught you. Pretty soon I was going over there to find out about it. Did you peep into the camp?"

"My brother, I have found out what we wished to know," said Black Cloud. "Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother are in the Shawnee camp. Three Ojibwa scouts are with them. When the sun comes, they will set out for the Huron camp. They will travel a day's journey up the river in Shawnee canoes. Then Ho-sa-ha-ho will turn toward the-place-where-the-sun-appears. He has given the Shawnees the strong water. They are as mad as wolves that have tasted blood. Now, my brother, we must go to tell Achawi about it. The night is going. There is little time. Come."

"I am ready," replied Stands Alone.

"The Shawnees are in their village; there is no danger, we will follow the Shawnee trail to the top of the ridge," proposed Black Cloud.

They had not gone far, however, when they

heard sounds in the timber a short distance ahead of them. They stopped in their tracks and listened uneasily. Some one was approaching along the base of the ridge.

"Watch out," whispered Black Cloud.

Then they heard voices. The sounds were soft and low, and it was evident that the speakers were cautious and fearful of being heard. The Mohawks instantly became suspicious. They wondered if they had been discovered by Shawnee scouts who had been reconnoitering along the ridge.

"If they come ahead, they will find us," whispered Stands Alone.

"Sh," breathed Black Cloud.

The unknown prowlers were approaching. Black Cloud and Stands Alone were in despair. They feared to move, and yet they realized that if they remained where they were, they would be discovered. Then the footfalls ceased. A moment later they heard a familiar voice within several bow lengths of them.

"Perhaps our brothers are nearby," it said. "Kichkinet, make the signal."

"Dancing Wolf!" Black Cloud called, softly.

"Hi, my brother, we have found you," said Dancing Wolf.

Then Dancing Wolf, and Kichkinet, and Lit-

tle Bear, and Yellow Eagle emerged from the shadows.

"My brothers, what brings you here?" Black Cloud asked, irritably.

"We saw the great fire in the Shawnee camp, and heard the noise, and we believed the Shawnees had caught you," said Kichkinet. "We came down here to help you. Now we see you are alive. It is enough."

"Black Cloud did you look into the Shawnee camp?" Little Bear asked, eagerly.

"I have found out what we wish to know," said Black Cloud. "Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother are in that camp. When the sun comes they will leave. There is little time to talk. We must go to Achawi. Then I will tell you about it."

"Good, good," said Dancing Wolf.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ROUND UP

DAYLIGHT was close at hand when the Mohawks reached the top of the ridge, and turned toward the place where they had left Jim and Holcombe. As they approached, Kichkinet imitated the call of the little red owl. The answer came at once. A moment afterward they met the white men.

"My brothers, I am glad to see you," Jim said, joyously. "Black Cloud, To-nes-sa-ah and I have been troubled about you."

"Achawi, everything is good," declared Black Cloud. "I have found out what you wished to know. Come, my brothers, we will sit down and talk about it."

They formed the council circle, and Black Cloud began his story.

"My brothers, I crawled up and peeped into the Shawnee camp," he said. "I saw Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother, and three Ojibwas. Ho-sa-ha-ho has brought the strong water to the Shawnees. It has turned them into mad

wolves. That is why you heard that great noise down there in the camp.

"When I looked into the camp, I saw that Ho-sa-ha-ho was about to make a talk. 'It is good,' I said. 'Now I will know what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do.' Pretty soon he began to talk. He talked very big. He told the foolish Shawnees many lies. They believed his words. Now, my brothers, listen sharp while I tell you about it.

"Ho-sa-ha-ho told the Shawnees that he led their warriors into our village and killed many of our people. He told them that he led their warriors down into the country of the Great White Chief and wiped out many villages. He told them that he brought the strong water from those villages. Then, my brothers, Ho-sa-ha-ho told the Shawnees that he was about to do something bigger. He told them that he had sent the Ojibwas to awaken the Hurons. He said he would bring a great war party of Hurons and Ojibwas to the Shawnee camp. He said they would go down into the country of the Great White Chief, and break down the forts and kill the soldiers. He said they would wipe out the villages and kill many people. Then Ho-sa-ha-ho told the Shawnees that he would lead that great war party against my people."

Black Cloud paused and looked searchingly at his companions. The Mohawks remained silent, but their eyes gave evidence of the wrath that raged in their hearts. Holcombe shook his head, and laughed softly.

"Jim, it 'pears like Trouville has set himself quite a job," he said.

Jim nodded thoughtfully.

"Now, my brothers, I will tell you what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do," said Black Cloud. "When the sun comes, Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother and those three Ojibwas will go up the river in Shawnee canoes. At the end of the day they will leave the Shawnees, and set out toward the-place-where-the-sun-appears. They are going for a big talk with the Hurons and the Ojibwas. Ho-sa-ha-ho will ask them to strike the war post.

"My brothers, continue to listen. The Shawnee chief asked Ho-sa-ha-ho to stay in the camp, and send the Ojibwas to bring the great war party. Here are the words of Ho-sa-ha-ho. He said, 'My brothers, it would be useless. I am the only one who can bring this great war party together. If I do not go to the Huron camp, the Hurons and the Ojibwas will remain in their lodges. They will wait for my words. If I remain here, we cannot do the great things

I have told you about.' Now, my brothers, I have told you what Ho-sa-ha-ho proposes to do."

For some moments after Black Cloud had ended his talk, the little company of scouts kept silent. They appeared stunned by the boldness of the famous French half-breed. Then the Mohawks looked inquiringly at Jim. He was their leader, and they were awaiting his decision.

"Black Cloud, you have done a great thing," said Jim. "Now we know what to do. My brothers, you have heard the words of Ho-sa-ha-ho. We must see that he does not reach the Huron camp. Much depends upon it. Now I will tell you what I propose to do. We will watch sharp until Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brothers leave the camp. Then we will follow them up the river. When Ho-sa-ha-ho leaves the Shawnees, we will follow after him. When it grows dark he will stop for the night. Then we will creep up and catch him."

"It is good," agreed the Mohawks.

Daylight had come, and they rose and went to watch the Shawnee camp. It was quiet and lifeless. However, it was not long before people appeared from the lodges, and smoke rose above the stockade. A strong wind blew from

the north, and the river was rippled with white caps.

"Trouville an' his friends will make slow headway agin' this blow," declared Holcombe.

"It is true," replied Kichkinet. "Ga-oh, the great Wind Maker, is helping us. Now it will be easy to keep up with the canoes."

"Yes, it is the work of Ga-oh," agreed the superstitious Mohawks.

Then they watched silently until the sun appeared above the eastern ridges. Soon afterward they saw the Shawnees moving toward the river. The entire tribe appeared to have assembled at the edge of the water, and it was not long before a confused medley of sounds rose from the valley. It was evident that Trouville was again rousing the Shawnees with his deceitful boasts. The Mohawks laughed scornfully.

"Ho-sa-ha-ho is setting out to do a great thing, but I do not believe he will go far with it," Black Cloud said, significantly.

"Those foolish Shawnees will wait a long time for him," declared Stands Alone.

"Yes, yes," laughed his companions.

Jim kept silent. He realized that the safety of the settlements depended upon him and his little company of loyal Mohawk scouts. If by

any chance Trouville eluded them and reached the Huron camp, Jim felt certain that the English frontiers would be swept by a devastating Indian warfare that might threaten the very existence of the colonies. He believed that Trouville was staking everything on a final desperate attempt to unite the hostile tribes in one great war party that would sweep aside the frontier garrisons and their Mohawk allies, and open a way for the French to send their troops against the prosperous settlements along the Mohawk and Hudson rivers. The thought made him serious.

"Dan, Trouville is far more dangerous than I realized," Jim said, soberly. "We must get him at any cost."

"The chances favor us," replied Holcombe.

"See, Ho-sa-ha-ho is setting out," Kichkinet cried, suddenly.

Five canoes moved from the shore and turned up the river. There were three persons in each canoe. As they moved slowly on their way, the Shawnee war cry echoed shrilly between the hills, and the man in the center of the leading canoe waved his cap.

"That must be Ho-sa-ha-ho," Black Cloud said, savagely.

"Come, my brothers," cried Jim.

They moved along the top of the ridge which extended parallel with the river. They had little trouble in keeping abreast of their enemies, for although there were two paddlers in each canoe, they made slow progress against the strong wind from the north.

"It will be easy to keep up with them," said Kichkinet.

However, at midday they found that the ridge left the river and extended more to the eastward. They waited until the canoes had passed from sight around a turn of the shore, and then they descended to the lowland. They heard the low, rumbling warning of the rapids.

"It is good," said Black Cloud. "Now the Shawnees must come to land."

When they again came in sight of the canoes, they saw that the paddlers were approaching the shore to avoid a long stretch of turbulent water that barred their progress up the river. They were barely two long bowshots away, and the scouts had little difficulty in recognizing Trouville and Stockley and the three Ojibwas. They were accompanied by ten Shawnees. When they reached the shore, the Shawnees dragged the canoes from the water and carried them into the woods. A few moments afterward Jim and his companions followed rapidly

on their trail. The voices of the Shawnees sounded plainly through the woods, and their confidence filled the Mohawks with glee. Once past the rapids the Shawnees launched the canoes and continued up the river. The wind had increased to a gale, and the paddlers kept close to the shore to avoid the powerful blasts that swept down the center of the river.

"They'll soon tire o' this," Holcombe told Jim.

The day was barely two-thirds gone when the Shawnees ceased the struggle, and turned toward the shore. It appeared that Trouville had determined to abandon the river and take to the woods. The scouts watched with sharp interest while the Shawnees maneuvered to avoid smashing their canoes against the rocky shore. They were skillful canoemen, however, and they landed without mishap. Then they again dragged the canoes into the woods and sat down to talk with Trouville and his companions. The latter appeared in no hurry to begin the long journey to the Huron camp, and the sun was disappearing behind the western hills when they finally set out on their way.

"Bon voyage, my friends," Trouville called gayly. "Pretty soon I will return with my warriors."

"Thar's another boast that's unlikely to come true," laughed Holcombe.

"I sincerely hope so," said Jim.

They waited until the Shawnees were a safe distance down the river, and then they followed cautiously on the trail of Trouville and his companions who had turned toward the east. Trouville and Stockley were noisy travelers, and their loud, careless talk echoed through the woods, and made it easy to follow them. It was apparent that they saw little reason for caution.

"They feel very safe," said Kichkinet.

"Safer than they'll feel a little later," Holcombe replied, grimly.

Then, as the light slowly faded from the woods, they proceeded with more caution, for they believed that Trouville would soon stop to camp for the night. To prevent blundering unexpectedly upon their foes, Black Cloud and Dancing Wolf moved on in advance while their companions followed more slowly some distance behind them. The two scouts quickly returned and said that Trouville had stopped in a grove of hemlocks less than three bowshots away.

"Yes; we heard them talking and laughing, and breaking sticks for a fire," said Black Cloud.

Jim was elated at the announcement. The long search appeared to be drawing to an end, and he hoped before the night passed to have Trouville and Stockley in his hands. The Mohawks were impatient and eager to attack their foes without further delay. Jim promptly objected.

"My brothers, I am the leader, and you must listen to my words," he said, sharply. "I propose to wait here until our enemies lie down to sleep. Then we will creep up and overtake them."

"Achawi, you are the leader; we will do as you propose to do," agreed Black Cloud.

Soon afterward they heard the crackling of the fire, and then they smelled smoke. It was evident that Trouville and Stockley were more concerned for their comfort than for their safety.

"My brothers, I am going to ask Kichkinet to creep up and watch our enemies," said Jim. "Then we will make sure that they cannot get away. When they lie down to sleep Kichkinet will come for us."

"I will go," said Kichkinet.

He left them and moved away in the direction of the fire. Then for a long time they sat in silence, waiting for the summons to advance

upon their foes. The night was half gone when Kichkinet returned.

"My brothers, the way is clear," he said. "The fire has died down. Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brothers are asleep."

"It is good," replied the Mohawks.

"Mohawks, listen to my words," said Jim. "We must keep together. If we separate, perhaps we will kill each other. Now we will go ahead."

They followed noiselessly behind Kichkinet, who led the way toward the fire. It had burned to embers, but they saw it glowing feebly through the darkness. When they were within a short bowshot of the camp they stopped, and Kichkinet pointed out the spot where Trouville and Stockley were lying close beside the fire. He said that the Ojibwas were several bow lengths away, and that all were sleeping soundly. The Mohawks drew their tomahawks from their belts. Then they waited for the command to attack their foes.

They advanced noiselessly toward the sleepers, and were almost upon them when a smoldering ember suddenly snapped and awakened the Ojibwas. They sat up and discovered the scouts within a bow length of them. Raising the alarm, they drew their knives and attempted

to protect themselves. Black Cloud sank his tomahawk in the skull of one; Yellow Eagle killed another, and the third fled into the night with Dancing Wolf and Little Bear in close pursuit.

In the meantime Jim, and Holcombe, and Kichkinet and Stands Alone had rushed upon Trouville and Stockley. Trouville fought valiantly before he was finally overpowered by Jim and Stands Alone, but Stockley surrendered in a panic of fear. Jim opened the buckskin bag which hung at his side and drew out a number of stout rawhide thongs, and then Stands Alone and Holcombe bound the wrists of their captives. They led them to the fire. Stands Alone threw fresh fuel upon the embers, and Trouville and Stockley suddenly recognized their captors. Stockley appeared bewildered and frightened, but Trouville quickly regained his composure.

"Ah, now I see who you are," he said. "Messieurs, I salute you."

CHAPTER XVIII

OVERTAKEN BY THE SHAWNEES

THE Mohawks began to taunt and threaten the prisoners, and for a moment or so Jim had grave fears for their safety. Trouville showed little concern, but Stockley shrank back in fear as the Mohawks glared fiercely into his face, and threatened him with their knives. He recalled the sudden death of a former comrade who had been struck down while a prisoner in the Mohawk camp, and he saw the possibility of a similar fate for himself. Jim, however, kept close beside the prisoners, and made it plain to the Mohawks that he proposed to enforce his commands. Then he suddenly noted that Dancing Wolf and Little Bear were absent from the company. He ordered Trouville and Stockley to seat themselves beside the fire, and left Kichkinet and Holcombe to watch them. Then he called the other Mohawks and led them beyond hearing of the prisoners.

"My brothers, what has happened to Dancing Wolf and Little Bear?" he asked, anxiously.

"We are going to find out about it," Black

Cloud told him. "I saw Dancing Wolf and Little Bear chasing that other Ojibwa into the woods. They were close behind him, and I believed they would soon strike him down. They have not come back. It looks bad. We must try to find them."

"Go, my brothers," Jim told them.

"Achawi, if that Ojibwa has killed Dancing Wolf and Little Bear, we will come back and strike down Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother," Yellow Eagle declared, threateningly.

Jim kept silent.

A moment later Black Cloud, and Yellow Eagle, and Stands Alone disappeared into the night. For a long time Jim stood by himself, meditating upon the ominous threat of Yellow Eagle. He was greatly disturbed by the disappearance of the two Mohawk scouts, for he felt certain that if they had been killed, their companions would attempt to take swift vengeance upon Trouville and Stockley. The thought suggested alarming possibilities, for as an officer and law abiding subject of his king, Jim believed it was his duty to protect the prisoners from violence until he delivered them to the authorities at Fort Johnson. He determined to perform his duty even though it threatened his prestige with the Mohawks. Then, having made

his decision, Jim returned to the fire. He found Holcombe and Kichkinet examining the rifles which they had taken from the captives.

"Monsieur, eet ees a ver' good weapon," Trouville told Holcombe. "Eef my hans were free, I would show you how true she shoots."

Holcombe looked up quickly as he caught the threat in the words of the half-breed. For an instant he stared angrily into the smiling face of his foe. When he spoke, however, his words were soft and calm.

"Frenchy, if you keep on talkin' that way, mebbe I'll be tempted to try out the weepon myself," he said.

Trouville shrugged his shoulders, and laughed lightly. He was about to say something more, but he suddenly caught the danger signal in the eyes of the scout and kept silent. Stockley appeared relieved. It was apparent that he had no desire to arouse the anger of his captors. Then Trouville turned to Jim.

"Monsieur Achawi, I—"

"Silence!" Jim cried, angrily. "We wish no more of your talk."

Trouville winked at Stockley. The latter glanced uneasily at Jim. The mute, frightened appeal in his eyes, and his pale, anxious face proclaimed him a coward, and Jim looked upon

him with scorn. Jim motioned for Dan to follow him from the fire. Then he spoke to Kichkinet.

"Mohawk, if these men attempt to rise, shoot them at once," he said.

"I will watch them," said Kichkinet.

Jim and Holcombe moved away. When they were beyond earshot, they stopped. Then Jim told Dan of his fears.

"Dan, I am greatly troubled about Dancing Wolf and Little Bear," he said.

Holcombe kept silent.

"If anything has happened to them, I fear it will be difficult to save our prisoners from the wrath of the Mohawks," Jim told him.

"Jim, they're desarvin' o' whatever befalls 'em," Dan said, savagely.

"That is very true," agreed Jim. "I have little doubt that both will receive the death penalty when they come before a court martial at Fort Johnson. However, my duty as an officer in the service of the king compels me to afford them protection as prisoners of war. Dan, I am determined to uphold the honor of the service at any cost."

It was some moments before Holcombe spoke. He appeared to be carefully considering the possibilities. Jim waited for his reply.

"Jim, lad, I like your spirit, an' what's more I believe you're right about this thing, but I fear you'll have a bad break with the Mohawks. You know, as well as I do, that Injun ways are different from the ways of white men. It's hard to make 'em see that our ways are sometimes best. If the Ojibwa has killed Dancing Wolf and Little Bear, which I disbelieve, it'll be hard to save those scamps who are to blame for it."

"Nevertheless, Dan, you will help me," Jim said, earnestly.

"Yes, Jim, you can figure on that," Dan told him. "However, I'd feel powerful bad to break our friendship with the Mohawks on account o' two worthless rogues that would kill us this minute if they found the chance."

"Dan, have no fear," Jim assured him. "I shall take every precaution against losing the friendship of our loyal allies."

"I hope so," Dan said, heartily.

At that moment the Mohawks returned from their search. Jim was relieved to see Dancing Wolf and Little Bear in the company. The Mohawks, however, appeared depressed and ill at ease.

"It is bad," Black Cloud said, irritably.

"What has happened?" inquired Jim.

"Dancing Wolf will tell you about it," replied Black Cloud.

"Achawi, we were chasing that Ojibwa through the woods and I was close behind him," said Dancing Wolf. "My brother, Little Bear, was close behind me. Then I stepped into a hole and fell down. Little Bear fell on top of me. We jumped up and listened sharp. We could not hear the Ojibwa. Then we looked all around. We could not find him. I do not know what became of him. We kept looking to find him. Then we turned back and pretty soon we met our brothers. Then we came here."

"Jim, we'd best get goin' as soon as we can," said Dan. "That Ojibwa will make hot tracks for the Shawnee camp. By sun up thar'll be a Shawnee war party on our trail."

"It is true," declared Black Cloud.

"Black Cloud, what is the shortest distance to your village?" Jim asked, eagerly.

"Three sun's travel," replied Black Cloud.

"Lead us," said Jim.

They moved to the fire, and Jim commanded the prisoners to rise. Stockley looked nervously at the scowling Mohawks. Kichkinet glanced inquiring toward Dancing Wolf. The latter shook his head. Then Kichkinet went to Jim.

"That Ojibwa got away," Jim said, cautiously.

"It is bad," declared Kichkinet. "He will bring the Shawnees."

At that moment Trouville made a taunting remark to Black Cloud, and the Mohawk struck him to the ground. Then as the Mohawks crowded threateningly about the prisoners, Jim rushed into the company. He stood over Trouville and shook a warning finger in his face.

"Rise to your feet, and silence your tongue, or the Mohawks will silence it forever," he said.

Stockley was in a frenzy of fear. He called to Jim for protection.

"Mason, as a white man, save me from these savages," he implored.

"Stockley, you miserable coward, I despise you," Jim said, contemptuously.

A moment afterward they began the long journey toward the Mohawk camp. Black Cloud led the way with Stands Alone and Yellow Eagle, Jim kept close to the prisoners, with Holcombe and Kichkinet, and Dancing Wolf and Little Bear followed. They had not gone far before they discovered that Trouville was dragging his feet and leaving a telltale trail behind him. Jim seized him and whirled him about. Dancing Wolf and Little Bear pressed forward.

"Trouville, I am attempting to save you in order that you may have a fair trial at the hands of white men," said Jim. "However, if you give further trouble, either by word or act, I shall be tempted to turn you over to the Mohawks to receive the fate which you so well deserve at their hands. Now hurry forward, and attempt no more treachery."

Trouville raised his brows inquiringly.

"Monsieur Achawi, my legs are tired," he laughed.

"Get on thar!" shouted Holcombe.

Trouville moved forward. They kept close watch on him, but he appeared to have heeded the warning. When they had gone some distance, Jim called Dancing Wolf and Little Bear to walk behind the prisoners.

"Now, Trouville, your life is in your own hands," said Jim.

Trouville failed to reply. Jim and Holcombe dropped back to talk.

"He's a tricky snake, an' we've got to watch him every minute," said Dan. "Thar's no need to worry about Stockley, but I'm uneasy about what Trouville may do if the Shawnees come up with us."

"Then you feel quite certain that they *will* send a war party on our trail?"

Dan nodded.

"We have a full day's lead," Jim said, hopefully.

"I'm not so sartin o' that," Holcombe told him.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if the Ojibwa struck the Shawnee camp at sun up or a little after, as I figure he did, a war party is already on the move. He'll tell 'em whar he left us, an' they'll cut across country an' save considerable time. The sun has been up some time, an' I figure they'll strike our trail before it goes down."

Alarmed at the possibility, they traveled steadily through the day and far into the night. It was almost dawn when they finally stopped beside a little spring. Shortly after sunrise they continued the journey. Then Black Cloud turned farther to the southward, and Kichkinet declared that he was making directly toward the Mohawk camp.

"Before the next sun goes down we will be there," he said.

"Much may happen before that," Jim replied, soberly.

Later in the day Dancing Wolf and Little Bear dropped behind the company to watch for the Shawnees. Shortly before sunset Little

Bear came back, and reported that he had heard signals to the westward.

"Go fast, my brothers, for I believe the Shawnees are close behind us," he said. "Dancing Wolf is waiting to find out about it."

Jim sent Holcombe and Little Bear to watch the prisoners, and then he called the other Mohawks for a council.

"My brothers, Little Bear has heard signals," he said. "He believes the Shawnees are close behind us. We are in great danger. Come, speak fast, and tell me how you feel about it."

"Achawi, I will lead you to a place where we can make a big fight," said Black Cloud. "I stood off many Delawares in that place. It is over there on that ridge ahead of us. There is little time to talk. Come, my brothers."

At that moment Dancing Wolf arrived. He was breathing heavily and appeared greatly excited.

"My brothers, the Shawnees are almost here!" he cried. "We must get ready to fight."

"Not yet, not yet," cried Black Cloud. "Follow me."

Trouville and Stockley were quick to guess the significance of the sudden excitement, and Trouville sought to cause delay. He stumbled and pretended to have dislocated his ankle, but

Holcombe cocked his rifle, and prepared to shoot, and the wily half-breed instantly recovered and ran without difficulty. Then, as they finally reached the base of the ridge and scrambled wildly up the rocky slope, they suddenly heard the Shawnee war cry ringing through the woods.

"They have discovered us," cried Jim.

"Faster, faster," shouted Black Cloud.

Trouville and Stockley had great difficulty in making the climb with their hands bound behind them, but Jim and Holcombe assisted them over the rough spots and kept them on their feet. Once Trouville hesitated and glanced back toward the Shawnees, but Jim warned him, and he kept silent. A few moments later they gained the shelter. It was a deep cavern in the side of a high ledge. They clambered eagerly over the barricade of rocks which Black Cloud had erected against the Delawares, and then they prepared to fight off the Shawnees.

"Now we are ready for them," panted Black Cloud, as he crouched behind the breastwork.

CHAPTER XIX

KICHKINET SLIPS AWAY

HAVING reached their goal, Jim and Holcombe felt more hopeful. They took the prisoners to the rear of the cavern, and ordered them to lie down. Then, after they had bound their ankles and warned them against making an outcry, they left them and hastened to join the Mohawks, who were watching silently behind the barricade. The place afforded ideal protection, for to reach them the Shawnees would be compelled to advance directly up the steep rocky side of the ridge.

"They'll be cautious about tryin' it in daylight," said Holcombe.

The Shawnees had suddenly become silent, and the Mohawks believed they had stopped at the base of the ridge. Then Black Cloud discovered something moving through the undergrowth, a short distance down the slope. He warned his companions, and they watched closely. In a few moments they saw a warrior peeping cautiously over the top of a rock.

"There he is," said Stands Alone. "He is trying to find out about this place."

Holcombe aimed his rifle, and, as the head of the Shawnee again appeared above the rock, he fired. The Shawnee rose to his knees, spread his arms, and toppled backward into the undergrowth.

"That's the last o' *him*," Holcombe said, grimly.

The Mohawks raised the war cry. They were answered with wild shouts from the Shawnees. The fight had actually begun. It was a long time, however, before the Mohawks saw anything more of their foes. Then they saw a warrior suddenly rise from the bushes and run to cover behind a tree. He was more cautious than his unfortunate comrade, and the Mohawks were unable to discover him as he peeped around the tree to examine the ledge. They wished Holcombe to shoot at the tree and frighten the Shawnee from his hiding place. Holcombe shook his head.

"It would be a waste o' powder an' lead, an' we're likely to need plenty o' both before we get away from here," he said.

A few moments later they saw the Shawnee retreating cautiously from tree to tree until he

finally disappeared into a dense growth of saplings farther down the ridge.

"Now they'll wait for night," declared Holcombe.

"Yes, they will creep up here when it gets dark," replied Black Cloud.

They were eager to learn the strength of the war party, but the Shawnees refused to show themselves before darkness finally closed down. Then the Mohawks heard them talking and singing their war songs somewhere along the base of the ridge. The sounds made it plain that the Shawnees were strong in numbers, and the Mohawks realized that they were in a perilous predicament.

"There are many Shawnees down there, but we will keep them off," Stands Alone said, confidently.

"We must not feel too sure about it," Black Cloud cautioned him.

"That is true," agreed Jim.

The night was black and starless, and they were unable to see a bowshot beyond the barricade. They realized that it would be easy for the Shawnees to approach close to the ledge without being discovered.

"We must listen sharp," said Jim.

Soon afterward they were surprised to hear

some one calling out in the Mohawk tongue. The speaker appeared to be within bow range of the ledge, and his words sounded plainly through the night.

"Hi, you Mohawks," he called. "Listen sharp to my words. I am Big Hawk, the great war chief of the Shawnees. I have climbed up here to give you a chance for your lives. You have killed our brother and carried away our friends. We are very mad about it. My warriors are ready to rush up there and kill you. I have held them back. I said, 'We have come here to carry off our friends. If we do that, it will be enough.' That is why I am giving you a chance for your lives. Now, Mohawks, listen close to my words. If you let our friends walk down to us, we will go away and leave you to return to your village. If you close your ears to my words, we will climb up there and kill you. Now, Mohawks, tell me what you propose to do."

The Mohawks greeted the proposal with shouts of derision. Then Jim called out sharply, and they became silent. A moment afterward he replied to the Shawnee chief.

"Shawnee, your words are bad," he said. "It is true that we have carried off Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother. They have killed many of

our people and burned our villages. They have told you many lies about us. They are fooling you, as they tried to fool the brave Mohawks. If you listen to their words, they will bring many bad days upon you, and many of your warriors will be killed. My people and their Mohawk brothers will stand together. They are too strong for you. Stay in your hunting grounds, and no one will harm you. Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother have made trouble between my people and your people. It is what they set out to do. They wish to give your hunting grounds to the fierce Hurons and their brothers the French.

"Now, Shawnee, give these words to your warriors. We do not propose to give up Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother. We propose to take them to our Great White Chief. You will never see them again. If you come up here to fight us, many of you will be killed, for we propose to fight to the end. Before we die we will surely kill Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother, so that it will do you no good to throw away your lives. Shawnees, go back to your lodges, and think no more of these bad white men. Then we will go away and leave you in peace. I am Achawi, the leader of the brave Mohawks, and I propose to do as I have told you. Shawnee, I have finished."

"Hi, hi, Achawi has spoken the words of a great chief," cried Yellow Eagle.

The Shawnee, however, kept silent. The Mohawks listened suspiciously. Many moments passed. Then they heard the murmur of voices. They knew that the Shawnees were discussing the words of Achawi. They talked a long time. Then the voice of the Shawnee chief again sounded through the night.

"Achawi, I have told your words to my brothers," he said. "We have talked a long time about it. Now we see that what you have told us is good. Tell your brothers that we are going back to our lodges. Go to your village. The way is clear."

Trouville attempted to call out, but Holcombe had stationed himself beside the prisoners as Jim began to talk, and a sharp blow on the mouth quickly silenced the half-breed.

"It is a trick," said Black Cloud. "The Shawnees are trying to draw us out of this place to kill us."

"Watch out, my brother," Kichkinet cautioned Jim.

"Mohawk, I am not foolish enough to believe those words," Jim told him.

"Well, Achawi, I am waiting for your words," the Shawnee cried, impatiently.

"Big Hawk, your words are good," said Jim. "Go to your lodges. When the sun comes, we will look around. If we do not find you, we will go to our village."

"It is good," replied the Shawnee.

"Now, Mohawks, watch out," said Jim.

They were convinced that the Shawnees were attempting to deceive them, and they believed that at any moment they might suddenly rush from the darkness and attack the ledge. For some moments, however, they heard nothing to confirm their suspicions. Then they heard the Shawnees moving away through the woods. They were talking noisily, and it was evident that they wished to be heard. The Mohawks laughed heartily.

"They have sent some scouts over there to make us believe they are going away," said Kichkinet. "Many warriors are waiting down there in the woods below us."

"It is another trick," Jim told him.

The sounds gradually grew faint, and finally died out in the distance. Then for a long time all was still. The Mohawks kept grim, silent vigil behind the barricade.

"Jim lad, if the Shawnees mean business, we're in a tight fix," Holcombe said, uneasily. "They may keep us holed up here for several

days. I'm uneasy about it. Thar's no water, an' I'll wager the Shawnees know it. That's likely what they're figurin' on to beat us."

"I have been thinking of that," replied Jim.

Kichkinet joined them.

"My brothers, I am going to bring my people," he said, quietly. "It is the only thing to do. The Shawnees are very mad. They will stay here a long time. Perhaps many days will pass. There is no water. It is bad. Pretty soon some of those Shawnees will climb up to the top of the ridge to catch us if we go out when the sun comes. If we wait, it will be too late. I must go."

"Kichkinet, you are very brave," said Jim. "Have you told your brothers what you propose to do?"

"Yes, I have told them about it. They say it is the only thing to do."

"Then I will say nothing against it," said Jim.

A few moments later Kichkinet crawled over the barricade and disappeared into the night. His companions listened anxiously. They believed that if he succeeded in crossing the top of the ridge he would be safe. However, they had grave fears that Shawnee scouts might al-

ready have climbed up there to watch. As the moments passed and they heard nothing to awaken their fears, they began to hope that Kichkinet had escaped. The possibility filled them with joy.

"Dan, I believe the Mohawk has crossed the ridge," said Jim.

"It begins to look like it," replied Holcombe.

He had barely spoken when they were aroused by a piercing shout from the top of the ridge, and a moment afterward a rifle shot roared through the woods. The Mohawks turned to one another in alarm.

"Perhaps the Shawnees have killed our brother!" cried Black Cloud.

"Oh, Dan, do you believe it?" Jim asked, fearfully.

"They shot at him—mebbe he got away," Holcombe replied, hopefully. "An Injun is far better with a bow than a rifle. Besides, the night is dark. Mebbe they heard him an' shot at the sound. Anyway, let's hope."

They were interrupted by a warning cry from the Mohawks.

"I heard some one moving out there," Black Cloud told them.

They listened closely but the noise had stopped. It was not long before they heard it

again. Some one was moving stealthily through the bushes.

"Watch out, my brothers, perhaps it is Kichkinet," whispered Black Cloud.

"Dan, he may have been wounded," said Jim.

Then they heard a low, soft signal. It had sounded close at hand. The Mohawks became suspicious.

"It is not our brother," they said.

The scouts cocked their rifles; the Mohawks fitted arrows to their bows. They believed that the Shawnees had crept cautiously up the ridge, and were about to make an attack. Fearful that those hated foes had killed Kichkinet, they waited eagerly for the opportunity to avenge him.

Then the Shawnee war cry echoed along the ridge, and a great company of warriors rushed toward the barricade. The scouts fired their rifles and then laid them aside and drew their tomahawks. The Shawnees attempted to clamber over the low breastwork at the entrance to the shelter, and a desperate hand to hand struggle followed. Jim saw a dark form suddenly rise before him. The Shawnee struck savagely with his tomahawk, but Jim jumped aside and escaped the blow. Before the Shawnee recovered his balance, Jim struck him to the ground.

Holcombe had vanquished another foe. The Mohawks were fighting like enraged panthers. Strive as they might, their foes were unable to drive them from the barricade. Then, as they realized that the effort was useless, the Shawnees lost heart and retreated down the side of the ridge. The Mohawks had escaped without loss, but they found little satisfaction in their victory. They believed that Kichkinet had been either killed or captured by his foes, and their hearts were heavy with grief.

"It is bad, it is bad," Black Cloud said, solemnly.

They watched silently through the night, but the Shawnees failed to renew the fight. At daylight the Mohawks looked anxiously through the woods but saw nothing of their foes. It was evident that the Shawnees had carried off their dead and wounded comrades under cover of the darkness. Then for a long time the Mohawks listened for sounds at the base of the ridge. They heard nothing but the noisy chatter of a squirrel.

"I believe the Shawnees are watching to see if we are foolish enough to come out," said Stands Alone.

"Yes, they are close by," declared Little Bear.

As there appeared to be little danger of another attack before dark, they determined to take turns at watching so that all might have an opportunity to sleep. Jim, however, found the effort useless. His anxiety for Kichkinet made sleep impossible. Throughout the long day he sat silently behind the barricade, thinking of the devoted comrade who, he feared, had sacrificed his life in an endeavor to save his friends.

However, when the day finally came to an end, Jim again turned his thoughts upon the Shawnees. He realized that his duty as the leader of the little company of scouts required him to make every effort to extricate them from their predicament. Besides, somewhere in the black depths of despair which filled his heart there still flickered a feeble ray of hope which refused to die.

At the approach of darkness the Mohawks again stationed themselves at the entrance to the cavern to watch for their foes. It was not long before they heard them exchanging signals. They appeared to have separated.

"It is the scouts who were watching on top of the ridge," said Black Cloud. "Now they are going to join the war party. Pretty soon they will begin the fight."

"Mohawk, I believe you are right," agreed Jim.

Soon afterward they again heard voices at the base of the ridge. Then the Shawnees began to taunt, and challenge, and sing their boastful war songs. Having learned that their foes were too sharp to fall into their trap, it was evident that they considered it useless to make further attempts to deceive them.

"See, Mohawks, we are still here," they shouted. "We have killed your brother, and pretty soon we will climb up there to kill you."

"My brothers, you have heard the words of the Shawnees," cried Black Cloud. "Now get ready to fight as you have never fought before."

Having made their threats, the Shawnees had suddenly become silent. The Mohawks believed that they were preparing to advance up the ridge. It was a long time before they finally heard them. Then they again heard the signal which had preceded the other attack.

"Get ready, my brothers, they are here," said Black Cloud.

"We are ready for them," replied the Mohawks.

At that instant the Mohawk war cry rose defiantly through the night. Then they heard

their tribesmen rushing down the side of the ridge upon the astounded Shawnees.

"Our brothers are here—Kichkinet is alive!" Jim cried, wildly.

The excited Mohawks scrambled over the barricade and rushed away to join in the fight. They had barely gone before Kichkinet reached the ledge.

"Achawi, I have brought a great war party," he said. "Listen. Our brothers are chasing the Shawnees through the woods."

Jim seized the hand of the Mohawk and danced for joy. It was some moments before he was able to control his emotion.

"My brother, we believed the Shawnees had killed you," he said.

"A scout heard me and fired his gun, but he did not touch me," laughed Kichkinet.

CHAPTER XX

SONGS OF VICTORY

DAWN was breaking when the victorious Mohawks finally returned to the ledge. They had administered another crushing defeat to the Shawnees, and they climbed the ridge in high spirits, shouting, and laughing, and singing their war songs. Trouville and Stockley listened uneasily. The latter was filled with panic. He had been condemned to death in the Mohawk camp two years before, for his part in the treacherous killing of an aged Mohawk warrior, but had escaped under mysterious and baffling circumstances. Now he felt certain that the Mohawks would lose little time in putting him to death. He turned his terror-stricken face toward Jim.

"Mason, these Mohawks will kill me as suddenly as they killed Granger," he whimpered. "You believe I had a hand in killing that old Mohawk, but I swear that Granger alone planned it. Mason, as a man of my own color and blood, I beg you to save me."

Jim looked in silent contempt upon the cower-

ing bully who for several years had played a conspicuous part in the barbarous attacks along the colonial frontiers. Stockley had been the friend and accomplice of such notorious scamps as La Valle and Granger and Trouville. Born and reared in the English settlements, he and Granger had soon developed into idle, roystering bullies upon whom the industrious settlers looked with contempt. Then, chafing under the restraint and responsibilities of civilization, they had turned from the settlements and attempted to establish themselves as traders with the Indians. It was not long before their injustice and brutality caused serious trouble for the colonists. As a result, Granger and Stockley were driven from the Indian camps, and at once began their career of outlawry. Turning against their own people, they enlisted to serve the French, and were employed to antagonize the friendly Mohawks, and guide marauding war parties of northern Indians to the colonial frontiers. La Valle and Granger had already paid the penalty with their lives. Stockley whimpered and cringed as he saw a similar fate drawing upon himself. The man's abject cowardice filled Jim with disgust, and he turned away and went to meet the Mohawks who had arrived at the barricade.

"Where is Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother?" demanded the Mohawks.

Then they suddenly discovered them lying in the shadows at the rear of the ledge. They crowded forward to see them, and Stockley cried out in terror. Jim and Holcombe and Kichkinet kept sharp watch as the angry Mohawks murmured threateningly against the prisoners. Several of the younger warriors drew their knives, but Jim quickly confronted them.

"My brothers, take care what you do," he said, sharply. "I am your leader, and you must listen to my words. I propose to take Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother to the Great White Chief. He has sent me here to find them. Now I propose to do as he has told me to do. You must not try to stop me. Those men have done many bad things. My brothers, the Great White Chief will know how to punish them."

Jim paused and looked calmly into the angry eyes of the Mohawks. An excitable young warrior mumbled threateningly and pressed forward, but Kichkinet drew him back. Then he turned to his companions.

"My brothers, I have told you what Achawi proposes to do," he said. "You all know that he must do as the Great White Chief has told

him to do. Why do you talk about it? We have come here to help him. Achawi is our brother. We must do as he tells us to do."

"My brothers, we are talking like foolish old women," said Black Cloud. "You have heard the words of Achawi. He is our leader. We will stop talking and do as he says."

The Mohawks showed signs of yielding. Jim was quick to seize his opportunity.

"My brothers, lead the way to your village," he cried. "I am tired and wish to go to my lodge and sleep. Then we will sit at the council fire and I will tell your people about Kichkinet, and Black Cloud, and Stands Alone, and Yellow Eagle, and Dancing Wolf, and Little Bear. They were very brave. If they had not come to help me, I could not have done this thing. I will tell your great chief Ha-yo-went-ha how you rushed through the night and frightened away the Shawnees. I have much to talk about. Come, my brothers, we must go."

"It is good," cried the Mohawks.

The day had almost ended when they approached the Mohawk camp. Several young warriors ran ahead to announce their arrival, and then the war party advanced slowly toward the village, shouting the war cry and singing their songs of victory. Stockley appeared to be

on the verge of collapse, but Trouville showed no fear.

"We'll have to watch sharp when we reach the camp," Holcombe warned Jim. "The old women an' the boys will start the fracas, an' before they get through the whole tribe may jine in."

"Ha-yo-went-ha will stop them," Jim said, assuringly.

As they drew near the stockade they found the camp already astir with excitement. The warriors who had been left to guard the village marched out to meet the war party, and behind them followed the old men, the women and boys, and a noisy company of dogs. Most of the women and boys carried sticks, and it was plain that they intended to attack the captives. For some moments all was noise and confusion. Jim halted the war party, and addressed the excited throng from the camp.

"Mohawks, stop and listen to my words," he cried. "A great day has come. We have again overcome the Shawnees, and caught Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother. We have brought them to your camp so that you may see them."

The Mohawks greeted the announcement with wild shouts of approval. It was some time before Jim was able to continue his talk.

"Wait, my friends, I have not finished," he said. "Listen sharp to my words. We are about to enter your village. We are going to the lodge of your great chief Ha-yo-went-ha. I see that many of you have sticks to beat the prisoners. You must not harm them before we bring them to the lodge of your chief. I have told your warriors about it. They will see that you do as I tell you to do.

"Come, my brothers, now we will go ahead."

The old women, and many of the boys crowded boldly into the war party and struck the prisoners. The warriors made little effort to protect them. Trouville laughed scornfully as the frenzied women beat him about the head and shoulders, but Stockley cringed and called out in alarm.

"Mason, they are killing me!" he cried.

Jim turned about in anger.

"My brothers, drive away those foolish women," he commanded.

The Mohawks dispersed the women and boys, and a few moments afterward the war party entered the camp. They marched toward the lodge of Ha-yo-went-ha, singing the war songs, and the entire tribe followed noisily behind them. They found Ha-yo-went-ha and Da-yo-ho-go, the Medicine Man, and Short Dog, and

aged Da-go-no-we-da assembled before the lodge to receive them.

"Great Chief, your warriors have overcome the Shawnees, and we have caught Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother," said Jim. "The Great White Chief has asked me to bring them to his village."

"Achawi, you have done another big thing," said Ha-yo-went-ha. "You are a great war leader. Pretty soon it will be dark. Then we will light the council fire."

"It is good," replied Jim. "Now I will take Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother to my lodge."

"Wait!" shouted old Da-yo-ho-go.

He rushed to Stockley and glared fiercely into his face. Stockley drew back in fear, and the Mohawks laughed at him.

"You fooled me once, but you will never fool me again," shouted Da-yo-ho-go. "Now we have caught you. It is good. Pretty soon you will see what we propose to do."

Fearful that the excited old Medicine Man might again arouse the wrath of the Mohawks, Jim seized the first opportunity to take the prisoners to his lodge.

"Mohawks, To-nes-sa-ah and I are very tired and we wish to sleep," he said. "Do not disturb us until the great council fire is lighted."

Then he and Holcombe took the prisoners to the little lodge at the end of the camp. A company of old women and boys attempted to follow them, but Jim ordered them off and they went away grumbling angrily.

Once in the lodge, Jim bound the ankles of the prisoners, and then he and Holcombe lay down to sleep. Night had fallen when they were awakened by the noise in the camp. The Mohawks appeared to be preparing for a ceremony. Jim went to the door of the lodge. A great fire was burning in the center of the village, and a large company of Mohawks had already assembled.

"Jim, lad, it'll be plumb risky to take Trouville an' Stockley out thar," Holcombe whispered, uneasily.

"I know it," Jim told him. "However, Dan, I can see no way of avoiding it. It was necessary to come to the camp to save time in reaching Fort Johnson. Besides, the Mohawks would have been offended if we had passed by their village."

"Yes, that's true enough, but I don't like the idea o' danglin' our prisoners before their eyes," said Holcombe.

"However, Dan, I believe we need fear only a few of the younger warriors."

"They're likely to start the others," replied Holcombe.

"We must prevent it," Jim said, resolutely.

They saw a company of Mohawks approaching the lodge. Jim was somewhat relieved to see Kichkinet and Black Cloud among them. He stepped from the lodge to meet them.

"My brother, we are about to begin the council," said Kichkinet.

"It is good," replied Jim.

"Bring out Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother," cried a warrior. "Our people are waiting for them."

Jim looked inquiringly at Kichkinet and Black Cloud.

"Yes; bring them out, my brother," said Kichkinet.

Jim entered the lodge. He found Stockley on his knees in the agony of despair. As Jim approached, he cried out wildly for mercy.

"Mason, you are leading me to my death," he cried. "You know that the Mohawks will strike me down as they struck down Granger. Oh, oh, you are as pitiless as the Mohawks! Have mercy on me, for I am innocent. Save me, save me, before it is too late."

Trouville turned upon him in scornful anger.

"I thought you were a man, but I see you are only a dog," he said.

As Holcombe stood in the doorway of the lodge, Jim stooped and unbound their ankles.

"Rise to your feet, and see that you hold your tongues," he commanded.

Then he led them from the lodge and accompanied the warriors toward the fire. The approach of the prisoners threw the Mohawks into a tumult. Stockley collapsed and attempted to stop, but Jim pushed him forward. They advanced through the company of jeering Mohawks, and made their way to Ha-yo-went-ha, who stood with his escort in the center of the council circle.

"Achawi, you have brought Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother; it is good," said Ha-yo-went-ha, as he looked sharply at Jim.

"Great Chief, I have told you the words of the Great White Chief," said Jim. "He has asked me to bring Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother before him. If I do not do as he has told me to do, bad things may come upon me. The Mohawks are my brothers. I believe they will help me to do this thing. I have no fear."

"Achawi, your words are good," replied Ha-yo-went-ha.

He signaled to Kichkinet, and Black Cloud

and Stands Alone. They went forward and led the captives to heavy posts which had been set up near the fire. Then, as the Mohawks jeered and taunted them, Trouville and Stockley were securely bound to the posts. Stockley's face was gray with fright, and great beads of sweat trickled down his forehead. His eyes rolled wildly, and a short, choking sob came from his pale, trembling lips. The Mohawks shouted with delight as an old woman ran up and twisted his nose. Trouville faced his foes without flinching. Having seen many brave men die at the torture stake, he was resolved to keep his courage to the end.

"Mohawks, look upon the men who have tried to fool you," cried Ha-yo-went-ha. "There stands Ho-sa-ha-ho and his white brother. I have asked Achawi to bring them here so that all of you may see them. Look well. You will never see them again. Achawi is about to take them to our brother, the Great White Chief. He will know what to do with them."

As Ha-yo-went-ha paused, a young warrior drew his knife and rushed toward Stockley. Ha-yo-went-ha stopped him with a command.

"Young man, take care what you do," he said, sternly. "I have told you what I wish you do. See that you do it.

"Now, my brothers, I am going to ask Achawi to give you his words."

For an instant Jim exchanged glances with Holcombe. They knew that the peril had passed, and the prisoners were safe from attack. Jim's heart filled with gratitude as he realized that the affection and loyalty of the Mohawks had finally overcome even their fierce desire for vengeance, and they had resolved to comply with his wishes.

"My brothers, I see that you propose to help me do what the Great White Chief has sent me to do," he told them. "It makes me feel very big. I will tell the Great White Chief what you have done. He will feel good about it. I believe he will send many presents for his brothers, the Mohawks.

"Now, my brothers, before I tell you what I propose to do, I must tell you about those brave scouts who came to help me. Kichkinet slipped away from the Shawnees, and came here to tell you what had happened to us. Kichkinet is very brave. Black Cloud went to the Shawnee camp and found out about Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother. Black Cloud was in great danger, but he was too sharp to be caught. Stands Alone went with him. He was as brave as Black Cloud, but only one could creep up to

the camp. Dancing Wolf, and Yellow Eagle, and Little Bear fought off the Ojibwas who were with Ho-sa-ha-ho. They were very brave. Those warriors who came to save us from the Shawnees were very brave. They rushed down the ridge and chased the Shawnees through the woods like frightened rabbits. My, brothers, I propose to tell my people about these things."

"It is good," cried the Mohawks.

"Now, my brothers, I will tell you what I propose to do," said Jim. "When the sun comes, I am going to the village of the Great White Chief. I will ask you to take me down the river in your canoes. It will save much time. I will ask your great chief Ha-yo-went-ha and many of your warriors to go with me. Then they will see what becomes of Ho-sa-ha-ho and his brother."

"It is good; it is good," cried the Mohawks.

Kichkinet and many other famous warriors made talks praising Jim and Holcombe, and the night was far gone when the council finally came to an end.

Soon after sunrise Jim and Holcombe led the prisoners from the camp, and made their way to the river. A great company of Mohawks followed them to jeer and threaten the captives.

Ten canoes were drawn up at the edge of the

water, and Ha-yo-went-ha and a notable company of warriors embarked to accompany Jim to Fort Johnson. Stockley entered a canoe with Kichkinet and Black Cloud. Trouville hesitated, and turned to look upon the vast unbroken forest which extended for unknown leagues toward his beloved northland. His face was serious, and there was a soft, wistful look in his eyes.

"Ba gosh, I bleeve she's be long tam wen Jacques Trouville travel dose woods agin," he said, sadly. "Bah, I was de great fool, eh?"

Then he shrugged his shoulders and laughed lightly.

"Messieurs, Jacques Trouville is ready for begin—his long journee," he said, as he entered the canoe with Jim and Holcombe.

THE END

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